

UWorship
RESOURCE

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INTRODUCTION

UWorship: The Basics

Welcome to the UKirk *UWorship* resource. Already in that first sentence you may realize that the people who wrote this sometimes use strange language. UKirk? What's that? Why do you call it a resource? You may also have some questions about why this exists, how best to use it, and who put it together. We've tried to answer some of those questions in this introduction, though, of course, we might have missed something. Still, what's below should be enough to help you start to use the materials we've gathered here.

What is UKirk?

UKirk means University (U) Church (Kirk). It is a network of (predominantly) Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) campus ministers and students who share information, resources, and ideas in order to support their ministries. These ministries reach, love, and teach college students to be lifelong followers of Jesus Christ.

During the lead-up to the 220th gathering of the PC(USA) General Assembly in 2012, a small group was busy preparing for a presentation that would unveil a new direction for denominational campus ministry. A number of themes emerged, many of them related to providing connections and resources for those serving college students. But what would this mean? For one thing, UKirk provides a unifying brand identifying PC(USA) campus ministries from coast to coast. It has also called for gatherings for those serving students to come together and share ideas. Furthermore, UKirk has promised resources for campus ministry leaders—both students and ministry types. UKirk is committed to encouraging “prayer, participation, and support” and to promoting “the sharing of resources, models, and best practices” (ukirk.org). *UWorship* is one of the first of such resources.

Why *UWorship*?

Other than being a cool way to link this resource with the name for this network of support for college ministries, *UWorship* can also be read as a charge, an imperative: “Hey, you! Worship!” It reminds us that, as much as we grow and are changed through worship, worship is also something that we do because of who God is. Worship is about God and is directed to God. Worship is a response to what God has done and a preparation ground for what God calls us to do throughout our whole lives. Our ultimate hope is that what we've put together here helps you and your community to worship and glorify God.

The letter *U* also helps us remember that worshipping God is something that we all do and something that we do together. Worship is not just a time for “me.” Neither is it like a concert, where one person or group is doing the performing while everyone else sits back and watches. Instead, worship involves everyone—young, old, sick, healthy, men, women, the stranger, the outcast, the athlete, the scientist, the artist, dean's list and D-average students alike. As we support each other in talking with God, crying out to God, and giving God thanks, as we encourage each other to dive deeper into what we believe, as we help each other to grow in our trust of God and others, we find that each one of us grows and comes to see God in new and beautiful ways.

Finally, of course, *UWorship* was designed with university and college contexts in mind. However, we also hope (and believe) that people from churches, faith-based organizations, retreat centers, and youth groups will find what we've gathered here useful.

Who was involved in writing *UWorship*?

Mainly a group of people who have worked and continue to work in campus ministries across the country. Some of us have served in congregationally based campus ministries. Others have worked in ministries supported by boards. Still others work mainly as chaplains. Not all of us have worked in campus ministry, though. Some of us just love worship and crafting liturgy, especially liturgy built with young people in mind! We also worked closely with the PC(USA) Presbyterian Mission Agency offices of Collegiate Ministries and Theology and Worship.

What is a lectionary and how do I use it?

The Bible remains one of the major ways that people who call themselves Christians believe they encounter God. For those of us who are a part of the Reformed tradition, reading, praying, and even singing the Bible are important things we do in worship. Even when we do not specifically reference a Scripture passage, what we do in worship is often inspired by a word, phrase, or passage from the Bible. But sometimes it's hard to know what specific part of Scripture to engage on any particular Sunday, and all too often we gravitate toward certain sections of the Bible. This is like choosing classes from only one area of the curriculum, depriving ourselves of a well-rounded education. In order to deeply know God, and to enter into the deep and ongoing conversation to which the Bible invites us, we believe that we should try to engage as much of the Bible as possible. So, a lectionary offers Scripture passages—typically one Gospel passage, one passage from the remaining books of the New Testament, one passage from the Old Testament, and a psalm—to consider from week to week. It is a way of helping us to encounter more of the Bible as well as to find ideas for our worship before the well of our favorite passages runs dry.

Now, many churches already use a lectionary, one called the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL). This is good. It's actually very powerful to know that, if your church is using the RCL, millions of other people around the world are also reading, praying, and meditating on the same verses of Scripture as you.

Why did we create a *UWorship* lectionary?

Well, first, we should note that this resource is not designed to *replace* the RCL or the liturgical calendar in any way. However, we set out to create a lectionary that coincided with the student academic calendar, one that makes sense with their lives and schedules, bearing in mind the holidays and seasons they spend on and off campus.

The RCL is based on a three-year cycle, which means that it runs through a particular set of passages once every three years, then begins repeating these again. So, if on the first Sunday of Year A a church reads a passage from Matthew 24, it would read that same passage again three years later. But most colleges and universities average a four-year program. This inspired us to base our lectionary on a four-year cycle, with each year covering one of the four Gospels. Whereas in the RCL, the Gospels are regularly intermixed, in the *UWorship* lectionary, each Gospel is represented for an entire year.

We decided to offer three readings per week: one Gospel (as mentioned earlier), one psalm, and one selection from what we call the Broader Story. Since college is a time when students continuously learn and read, we created the Broader Story track moving straight from Genesis to Revelation, going through at least one passage from every book of the Bible over the course of four years. That way, students could learn and read from a variety of texts. We also wanted to choose passages of Scripture

that made sense by themselves as a unit. We focused on the psalms in one track, since these biblical prayers are especially descriptive and relevant to the lives of students. Finally, we knew that we wanted to develop a lectionary that lasted for 30 weeks, which is about the average number of weeks in the academic calendar. This way, people deeply involved in college ministries would not feel they had “missed” something by going away for the summer or at other major college breaks or holidays.

So there you have it. A *UWorship* Campus Lectionary that runs across four years, 30 weeks per year, giving each Gospel a year of its own, containing a passage from every book of the Bible, and containing most of the Psalms. Ideally, this would give a student the opportunity to hear all four Gospels, most of the Psalms, and a large sample of the remainder of the books of the Bible during their time within a worshiping community. Hopefully it provides a solid overview of the Bible for undergraduate and graduate students who may not have had much experience with the Bible or a community of faith.

What is GERB?

As you start to use this resource, you’ll soon realize that all of the liturgies and the structure of the occasional services have been collected around four major themes: **G**ather, **E**ncounter, **R**espond, and **B**less (a.k.a. the GERB). While we’ve provided a brief introduction to each of these worship moments within their respective sections in the resource, we’re going to take some time now to go more in depth as to why we find the GERB important and helpful.

Imagine that you meet a friend on the street. What happens? You probably say, “Hi!” Then you converse back and forth, listening and responding. At the end of the conversation, you say goodbye, maybe wish each other well, and perhaps even tell each other to give your greetings or your love to a mutual friend. You might make plans to do something together later. Maybe during this conversation, you realize that there’s something that’s been hindering your relationship with this person—a secret, hidden pain, an unspoken feeling. In order to really listen to this person, you realize that you need to deal with this, to get on the same page, to clear the air.

This imaginary conversation does a mostly good job of describing what we do in worship, as we encounter God and each other and, basically, have a conversation. Of course, all analogies break down at some point. But many people who call themselves Christian, and especially those in the Reformed and Lutheran traditions, think of worship as a kind of conversation. Martin Luther once said that “nothing else [should] be done in [worship] than that our dear Lord himself talk to us through His [*sic*] holy word and that we, in turn, talk to him in prayer and song of praise” (Peter Brunner, *Worship in the Name of Jesus* [St. Louis: Concordia, 1968], p. 123).

So, worship mostly flows like a conversation. But this is a conversation between multiple people. We talk both to God and to each other in worship. This is important to remember. Private prayer and community worship are closely related, but distinct. The reason many churches use liturgy—that is, written prayers and other resources like the ones gathered in this book—is so that all people who come to worship can participate.

Hi! and Clearing the Air	<i>Gather</i>
Listening to the Other	<i>Encounter</i>
Responding and Sharing	<i>Respond</i>
Bye! and Say Hi to ____.	<i>Bless</i>

Here's a more expanded form of this conversation, what we call the "flow" or "rhythm" of worship. Know that not all of the individual elements that we list here are included in every service of worship. The very simplest outline of worship would be some sort of beginning prayer (gathering and/or confession), a reading of Scripture, a prayer of offering or intercession for others, and a prayer of blessing and sending. Some churches do things in a slightly different order than we've offered here. We've mentioned a lot of options to encourage you to explore and adapt as needed. You should feel free to experiment within the GERB format we offer, like a painter mixing different versions of the primary colors (red, blue, yellow) to create a unique work of art. Start with the basics and work your way into something beautiful. We've put an asterisk (*) next to parts of the liturgy for which we have included original prayers written by our team within this resource itself. Also, please note that at the end of the GERB section there is a list of creative arts resources. Glance at these resources to see whether some of them might expand the possibilities of the given liturgies in ways that offer your community fresh perspectives. Note that they are broken down not only into the GERB sections but into more specific liturgical areas as well.

Recommendations for other creative ways to engage the senses, the body, and the emotions (which we highly encourage!) can be found within the Occasional Services and at ukirk.org. At the beginning of each of our occasional services, we've also included a "playlist" of songs that highlight or complement the theme or Scripture verse(s) around which the service has been written.

GERB

Gather

- *Call to Worship
- Song of Praise
- *Call to Confession
- *Prayer of Confession
- *Assurance of Forgiveness
- Song of Gratitude
- *Passing the Peace

Encounter

- *Prayer for Illumination
- Scripture
- Special Music or Other Interpretation
- Message or Prayer Practice or Bible Study
- *Prayer of Reflection
- Song of Reflection

Respond

- *Affirmation of Faith
- *Prayers of the People
- *Invitation to Offering
- Song of Offering
- Offering
- *Prayer of Dedication
- Baptism
 - *Presentation
 - *Profession of Faith
 - *Thanksgiving over the Water
 - The Baptism
 - *Remembering Our Baptism
 - Laying on of Hands
 - *Welcome into the Family of God
- Communion
 - *Invitation
 - *Great Thanksgiving
 - *Breaking the Bread
 - Sharing the Bread and Cup
 - *Prayer after Communion

Bless

- Song of Sending
- *Charge and Blessing

Formulating our worship this way also reminds us that worship is both simple and rich. In the Reformed tradition, we encounter the (sometimes strange) world of Scripture in order to see our own familiar world in a new way—as a place full of God’s glory. Through the Word of God we discover how God is active and at work in the world, and are invited to join in that work. But we don’t just encounter a text in worship; we also encounter the living God and each other. And this encounter deepens our trust in God and our love for others. The French Reformer John Calvin (1509–1564) called Scripture “spectacles,” glasses through which we are enabled to see God at work in the world more clearly.¹ The point of all of this is that we don’t worship Scripture, but rather the God to whom Scripture points.

Doing this also helps us to bridge the gap between college life and churches elsewhere. A lot of churches follow a similar flow of worship. By acclimating students to this rhythm, we empower them to transition more easily from a college faith community to a local congregation wherever they land.

What are occasional services?

Occasional services are about recognizing and bringing before God all the things that happen out in the dazzling theater of God’s glorious world.² These are services for specific moments or situations. They may include services designed to celebrate what’s happening on the Christian calendar, for example, Christmas or Easter. They also take into account God’s activity in our everyday schedules and invite us to glorify God in the midst of our day-to-day rhythms, which for college students include things like orienting to a new school year and preparing for exams. Additionally, they include worship for those moments and times when we are sent out to participate in God’s mission in the world. And in those moments of deep grief, when God draws us near to comfort us and listens as we cry in lament, services are offered to bring before God the hopes and needs of the worshipping community in the event of tragedy.

You will find the occasional services organized into the following three sections:

Liturgical and Academic Calendar
Service and Mission
Pastoral Care and Lament

1. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battle (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960), 1.4.1.
2. Calvin, 1.5.8.

In planning one of the occasional services for your worshiping community, you will find a complete order of worship following the GERB. For many elements of the service, liturgy and suggestions that are situation-specific have been provided. Sometimes a portion of the service (example: Affirmation of Faith or Prayer of Confession) is listed with no liturgy provided. In these instances, feel free to pull from other resources, or choose from those provided in this book by consulting the appropriate Gather, Encounter, Respond, Bless section.

You will notice that a playlist is located at the beginning of each order of worship. Some of these offer suggestions for where to sing or play these particular songs in the service. Others are meant to be plugged in as you feel led. (Hint: Consult the GERB for assistance with figuring out which song might be appropriate for which spot in the service. Think: is this a song of gratitude for God's grace encountered in forgiveness, or is this a song sending us out into the world in response to the Word encountered today?)

Lastly, we have provided a suggestion for how to approach the offering within each service. Understanding that college students may not have significant financial resources at their disposal and that the tone of each service is unique, creative, non-monetary offerings have been recommended. Feel free to adapt the offering in whatever way is most appropriate for your community.

How do I actually use this resource?

This should only be the beginning. That's why it's a resource, not the definitive be-all, end-all rule book for worship. How you use it depends on your community. Be creative. Consider your context. You don't have to follow the lectionary (but it might help as you're getting off the ground). You don't always have to use everything word for word. Change a phrase or a word here or there if it fits better. Maybe swap out one prayer from one service into another. Mix and match. But it might be good, especially if you are new to planning worship, to do things the way they are written at first, so that you can slowly get used to how things might go. It is also not vital that every piece in the GERB be incorporated each week.

We've also created a collaborative online document where communities from across the country can share the new and exciting ways that they have incorporated music, videos, visual art, and different prayer practices into their worship. After all, God wants us to use our whole selves in worship—body, mind, soul, spirit, creativity, imagination. We've started the document with a few ideas of our own, but our hope is that you will add to our initial list. You can find the document at our website: ukirk.org.

Is there anything else I should know?

Are you confused by a word or phrase used in one of the prayers? Maybe we're employing some language that is unfamiliar to you? We've tried to keep this in mind, especially for students who are gathering together without a campus minister and don't have a background in theology-speak, or for those who use the resource who are not a part of the Reformed tradition. We've compiled a **glossary** at the end of the resource that covers words that we think might potentially cause confusion.

Finally, as mentioned before, we know that we are not the only ones who have ever written prayers for worship or thought about how worship might flow. Many of us use other resources to plan our own worship. On the next few pages we've listed the resources that we've found most helpful. We've also listed some other resources at the beginning of *each* of the Gather, Encounter, Respond and Bless collections.

We're glad that you've stumbled across *UWorship*. We're hopeful that what we've shared here will encourage you and inspire you. Even more, we're confident that the Holy Spirit prays for us in words that our groans cannot express (Rom. 8:26) and that, in fact, Christ prays for us, too (Rom. 8:34). It is with this confidence—not in ourselves, but in the God we worship—that we offer these resources.

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CAMPUS MINISTRY LECTIONARY

The purpose of this lectionary is to give an overview of the Bible in a relatively short period of time to undergraduate and graduate students who may or may not have much experience with the Bible or a community of faith. This resource is designed for use in worshiping communities that follow a semester-based academic calendar. Typical semesters are about 15 weeks long, with the first semester of the academic year in the fall and the second semester of the academic year in the spring. This lectionary may need to be adapted to fit with your particular calendar. This resource is also designed for use over four years (or eight semesters), which is the typical length of time that an undergraduate student will spend working toward a degree. Ideally, this would give a student the opportunity to hear all four Gospels, most of the Ps.s, and a large sampling of the remainder of the books of the Bible during their time within a worshiping community.

It should be noted that this resource is not designed to replace the Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) or the liturgical calendar. Many student-based communities of faith gather on weekdays rather than Sundays and often do not meet during many of the most significant Christian festivals (e.g., Christmas, Easter, or Pentecost). Ideally, students would celebrate these significant Christian events in the context of a congregation if their student-based community of faith was not gathering during that time.

Year One, First Semester

	Gospel	The Broader Story	Psalms
1	John 1:1-14 The Word	Genesis 1:1—2:4 or 2:5-25 Creation Stories	1 The Two Ways
2	John 1:19-27 Jesus and John the Baptist or 1:35-42 First Disciples	Genesis 12:1-9 Call of Abram or 18:1-15 God Promised and Sarah Laughed	3 Deliverance Belongs to God
3	John 2:1-11 Wedding in Cana or 2:12-22 Jesus and Temple Tables	Genesis 32:22-32 Jacob Wrestling	4 Peace at Night
4	John 3:1-21 Jesus and Nicodemus	Genesis 45:1-15 Joseph, Brothers' Introduction	5 Rescue from Slander
5	John 4:1-29 Samaritan Woman	Exodus 3:1-15 Burning Bush/Call of Moses	6 Healing
6	John 5:2-18 Jesus Heals Man by Pool	Exodus 16:1-15 Manna in the Wilderness/Provision	8 Humbled by God's Majesty
7	John 5:30-47 Jesus Does Nothing on His Own	Exodus 32:1-14 Golden Calf/Idolatry	9:9-20 God Remembers the Needy
8	John 6:22-34 or 6:35-51 Bread of Life	Leviticus 25:1-17 Sabbath Year/Jubilee	12 God's Promises Are Sure
9	John 6:53-58 Jesus' Flesh and Blood	Numbers 6:22-27 Priestly Blessing	13 Dealing with Doubt
10	John 7:40-52 Nothing Good from Galilee	Numbers 20:1-13 Water from a Rock	15 Approaching God
11	John 8:2-11 Cast the First Stone	Deuteronomy 6:1-12 Shema—Hear, O Israel	16 God Is My Refuge
12	John 9:1-12 Jesus and the Blind Man	Deuteronomy 31:1-8; 23-29 Joshua Succeeds Moses	17 Beholding God's Face
13	John 9:13-25 I Was Blind, Now I See	Joshua 2 Story of Rahab	18:1-19 A Broad Place
14	John 10:1-18 The Good Shepherd	Judges 4:1-10 Story of Deborah	18:20-35 God's Faithfulness
15	John 11:32-44 Resurrection of Lazarus	Judges 7:9-25 Gideon's Dream and Trumpets	19 Creation and God's Law

Year One, Second Semester

	Gospel	The Broader Story	Psalms
16	John 12:1-8 Mary Anoints Jesus' Feet	Ruth 1:1-18 Naomi and Ruth	20 Trust God, Not Our Power
17	John 13:1-17 Jesus Washes Disciples' Feet	Ruth 3:1-14a Ruth and Boaz	22 Proclaiming God's Deliverance
18	John 14:1-14 No One Comes to the Father	1 Samuel 2:1-10 Hannah's Prayer	23 God My Shepherd
19	John 14:15-27 Spirit of Truth	1 Samuel 15:34-16:13 Samuel Anoints David	24 Who Is the King of Glory?
20	John 15:1-17 True Vine and Branches or 15:18-27 Jesus' Disciples and the World	1 Samuel 24 David Spares Saul's Life	25:1-15 Teach Me Your Paths, God
21	John 16:16-33 "In a Little While . . ."	2 Samuel 7:1-17 God's Covenant with David	26 Vindicate Me, O Lord
22	John 17:1-11 Jesus Prays for Himself and Disciples	2 Samuel 12:1-15a Nathan Rebukes David	27 The Lord Is My Light and Salvation
23	John 17:20-26 Jesus Prays for Future Believers	1 Kings 3:3-15 Solomon Prays for Wisdom	28 Do Not Refuse to Hear Me
24	John 18:1-12 Jesus' Arrest	1 Kings 17:8-24 Elijah and the Widow	29 Ascribe to the Lord, Heavenly Beings
25	John 18:15-27 Peter's Denials	1 Kings 18:20-40 Elijah and Prophets of Baal or 1 Kings 19:1-15a Hearing God in the Silence	30 You Have Turned Mourning into Dancing
26	John 18:28-40 Jesus before Pilate	2 Kings 4:1-7 Elisha and Widow's Oil	31:1-16 You Are My Rock and My Fortress
27	John 19:1-16a Jesus Sentenced	2 Kings 5:1-14 Naaman Is Healed	32 I'll Confess My Sins to the Lord
28	John 19:25b-42 Jesus' Death and Burial	1 Chronicles 29:10-20 David's Prayer/The Temple	33 Rejoice in the Lord, O You Righteous
29	John 20:1-18 Jesus Appears to Mary	2 Chronicles 32:16-23 Hezekiah and Sennacherib	34:1-14 Magnify the Lord
30	John 20:24-31 Jesus and Thomas or 21:15-19 "Do You Love Me, Simon Peter?"	Ezra 1:1-7 Preparing to Return Home	35:11-25 You've Seen It Too, Lord

Year Two, First Semester

	Gospel	The Broader Story	Psalms
1	Mark 1:1–15 John the Baptist in the Wilderness	Nehemiah 1 Nehemiah Weeps and Prays	36 Message in Heart
2	Mark 1:16–28 Fishers of People	Nehemiah 7:73b—8:3; 5–6 The Book of the Law	37:1–11; 23–24 Patience and Trust
3	Mark 1:29–45 Healing of the Sick	Esther 1:1–12; 2:1–10 Vashti and the Beauty Pageant	38 You Know My Longing
4	Mark 2:1–12 Faith of Friends— Healing of Paralytic	Esther 4 “For Such a Time as This”	39 A Passing Guest, a Stranger
5	Mark 2:13–17 Eating with Tax Collectors and Sinners	Job 1 The Story of Job	40 Hope in the Lord
6	Mark 2:23–28 Breaking the Sabbath Law	Job 3 The Authenticity and Confrontation	41 I Waited Patiently
7	Mark 3:20–30 Who Is My Mother? Brothers?	Job 19:1–25 The Loneliness of Friends	42 and 43 My Soul Thirsts for God
8	Mark 4:1–20 Parable of the Sower	Job 42 God’s Response to Job and His Friends	44 Rise up, God
9	Mark 5:21–43 Faith of Bleeding Woman, Girl Healed	Proverbs 3:1–20 Trust in the Lord/Wisdom	46 A Very Present Help
10	Mark 6:14–29 John the Baptist’s Death	Proverbs 15:1–10 The Power of Words	47 Clap Your Hands, All Nations
11	Mark 6:30–44 Feeding of the Five Thousand	Ecclesiastes 3:1–15 Times/Seasons	48 Great Is the Lord and Worthy of Praise
12	Mark 7:1–23 Food Cannot Contaminate	Ecclesiastes 12:1–8 Remember Your Creator	49:1–15 God Will Redeem
13	Mark 7:24–30 Syrophenician Woman	Song of Songs 8:6–7 Love Is as Strong as Death	50:1–15 God Speaks
14	Mark 7:31–37 Healing of Deaf Man	Isaiah 6:1–8 “Here I Am, Lord”	51:1–17 Have Mercy on Me, God
15	Mark 8:27–38 Who Do You Say That I Am?	Isaiah 11:1–9 The Root Shall Spring Up	52 I Trust God’s Unfailing Love

Year Two, Second Semester

	Gospel	The Broader Story	Psalms
16	Mark 9:2-13 The Transfiguration	Isaiah 43:1-10 Do Not Fear, I Am with You	54 Save Me, O God
17	Mark 9:30-41 Who Is the Greatest?	Isaiah 52:7-12 How Beautiful Are the Feet	55 Cast Your Care on the Lord
18	Mark 10:17-27 The Rich Young Man	Isaiah 61:1-4 The Spirit of the Lord upon Me	56 Enemies Attacking Us
19	Mark 10:35-45 James and John	Jeremiah 1:4-10 The Call of Jeremiah	57 God Sends His Love
20	Mark 11:1-11 The Triumphal Entry	Jeremiah 18:1-6 The Potter and the Clay	60 Save Us and Help Us
21	Mark 11:12-25 Jesus Clears the Temple	Jeremiah 29:4-14 Welfare of the City or 31:27-34 A New Thing	61 Lead Me to the Rock
22	Mark 12:1-12 Parable of the Tenants	Lamentations 3:1-6; 19-27 Lament and the Lord's Faithfulness	62 Finding Rest
23	Mark 12:38-44 Widow's Offering	Ezekiel 2:1-3:3 Ezekiel's Call and Eating the Scroll	63 God's Love Is Better than Life
24	Mark 13:1-8 Signs of the End of the Age	Ezekiel 37:1-14 The Valley of Dry Bones	64 Preserve my Life from the Dread Enemy
25	Mark 13:28-37 The Fig Tree	Daniel 1 The Story of Daniel	65 Praise Awaits You
26	Mark 14:12-26 The Lord's Supper	Daniel 3:19-30 The Fiery Furnace	66 Sing Praises to God
27	Mark 14:32-42 Gethsemane	Daniel 6:6-23 Daniel in the Lion's Den	67 Shout with Joy
28	Mark 15:16-32 The Crucifixion	Hosea 1:2-8 Hosea and Gomer	68:4-20 Bless the Lord
29	Mark 15:33-47 Christ's Death and Burial	Hosea 10:12-15 Righteousness of God	69:1-15 Save Me, God
30	Mark 16:1-20 The Resurrection	Joel 2:28-32 Pouring Out of God's Spirit	70 Hurry, God, to Deliver Me

Year Three, First Semester

	Gospel	The Broader Story	Psalms
1	Luke 1:26–38 Gabriel and Mary	Amos 1:1–2, 3:2–7 The Lord’s Plan	71 A Lifelong Companion
2	Luke 2:41–52 Boy Jesus	Amos 5:21–27 Justice Roll Down	72:1–19 Justice and Prosperity
3	Luke 3:21–38 Genealogy of Jesus	Obadiah 1:12–17 Deliverance of God’s People	73:1–26 A Brute Beast
4	Luke 4:1–13 Jesus Tempted	Jonah 1 Jonah’s Call and Running from It	74 Remember Your People
5	Luke 4:14–30 Jesus Rejected	Jonah 2 Jonah’s Prayer in the Fish	75 God Judges
6	Luke 5:1–11 Calling of First Disciples	Jonah 3 Ninevah’s Obedience and Repentance	77 Your Ways, O God, Are Holy
7	Luke 6:1–11 Lord of the Sabbath	Micah 2:6–11 Leaders Unwilling to Hear God	79 How Long, O Lord
8	Luke 6:27–42 Love for Enemies or 6:46–49 Building on Rock	Micah 6:1–8 What Does the Lord Require	80 Restore Us
9	Luke 7:36–50 Alabaster Jar and Anointing	Nahum 1:1–8 The Lord’s Anger	81 Worship the God You Know
10	Luke 8:22–25 Jesus Calms the Sea	Habakkuk 1:1–5 Complaint and Answer	83:1–3; 13–18 God, Do Not Keep Silent
11	Luke 8:26–39 Legion, Pigs, and Freedom	Zephaniah 3:14–20 Restoration and Joy	84 How Lovely Is Your Dwelling Place
12	Luke 9:1–9 Sending of the Twelve	Haggai 1 Story of Haggai and Zerubbabel	85 Love and Faithfulness
13	Luke 10:25–37 Good Samaritan	Haggai 2:1–9 Promised Glory	87 Foundation on Holy Mountain
14	Luke 10:38–42 Mary and Martha	Zechariah 8:7–17 Promises to Zion	88 Abandoned
15	Luke 11:1–13 The Lord’s Prayer	Malachi 4 The Day of the Lord	89:1–4; 19–29 David’s Line Established

Year Three, Second Semester

	Gospel	The Broader Story	Psalms
16	Luke 12:22-34 Consider the Ravens and the Lilies	Acts 2:1-21 The Day of Pentecost	90 God Is Our Dwelling Place
17	Luke 13:18-21 Mustard Seed and Yeast	Acts 2:42-47 Early Church Model	91 God Will Cover You
18	Luke 14:1-14 Humility and Places of Honor	Acts 8:26-40 Philip and Ethiopian Eunuch	92 The Righteous Will Flourish
19	Luke 14:25-35 Cost of Discipleship	Acts 9:1-19 Saul's Conversion	93 The Lord Is Robed in Majesty
20	Luke 15:11-32 The Prodigal	Acts 12:1-19 Peter Escapes from Prison	94:12-23 The Cares of My Heart Are Many
21	Luke 16:1-13 Shrewd Manager	Acts 16:6-15 Lydia's Conversion	95 The Lord, Our Maker
22	Luke 17:20-37 Kingdom Is Coming	Romans 6:15-23 Freedom from Sin	96 Sing a New Song
23	Luke 18:18-30 Rich and Kingdom of God	Romans 8:31-39 Christ's Love	97 Light Dawns for the Righteous
24	Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus	Romans 12:1-8 Living Sacrifices	98 Let the Sea Roar
25	Luke 19:29-40 Procession into Jerusalem	Romans 12:9-21 Transformed Relationships	99 God's Forgiveness and Justice
26	Luke 20:20-26 Pay Taxes to Caesar	Romans 14:13-23 Stumbling Block	102 Secure in God
27	Luke 21:1-6 Widow's Offering or 21:29-37 Parable of Fig Tree	1 Corinthians 1:18-25 Message of the Cross	103 God's Compassion
28	Luke 22:7-23 Passover/Lord's Supper or 22:47-62 Peter Denies Jesus	1 Corinthians 12:1-11 Gifts of the Spirit	104:1-30 God's Majesty
29	Luke 23:33-43 Jesus on the Cross	2 Corinthians 4:1-12 Treasures in Jars of Clay	105:1-15 Remember the Lord's Acts
30	Luke 24:1-12 Empty Tomb or 24:13-32 Emmaus Road	2 Corinthians 12:1-10 Grace Is Sufficient	107 Let the Redeemed of the Lord Say So

Year Four, First Semester

	Gospel	The Broader Story	Psalms
1	Matthew 1:18–25 Birth of Jesus	Galatians 2:17–21 Crucified with Christ	108 The Lord Saves
2	Matthew 2:13–23 Escape to Egypt	Galatians 5:16–25 Fruits of the Spirit	109:1–5; 21–31 The Lord Helps the Needy
3	Matthew 3:1–12 John the Baptist	Ephesians 2:8–22 Reconciliation of God’s People	111 Great Are the Lord’s Works
4	Matthew 4:1–11 Jesus Tempted in the Desert	Ephesians 6:10–20 The Armor of God	112 The Righteous Remembered
5	Matthew 4:18–25 Calling First Disciples	Philippians 2:1–11 Humility of Christ	113 The Lord Oversees
6	Matthew 5:1–12 The Beatitudes	Philippians 4:4–20 Don’t Be Anxious, Rejoice in the Lord	114 The Earth Trembles
7	Matthew 6:1–18 Alms, Prayer, and Fasting	Colossians 1:1–14 Thanksgiving and Prayer	115 To Your Name Be the Glory
8	Matthew 6:25–34 Do Not Worry	Colossians 3:12–17 Clothe Yourselves	116 The Lord’s Goodness
9	Matthew 7:1–12 Judging/Asking	1 Thessalonians 5:12–24 Be Joyful, Pray Continually	118:1–9; 19–29 Give Thanks to the Lord
10	Matthew 8:18–27 Jesus Calms the Storm	2 Thessalonians 3:1–5 God’s Direction/Perseverance	119:1–16; 97–105 Your Word Is a Lamp unto My Feet
11	Matthew 9:14–17 Fasting	1 Timothy 4:6–16 Spiritual Training	120 Save Me, Lord, from Lies
12	Matthew 10:5–15 Sending Out the Twelve or 10:16–24 Persecution	2 Timothy 2:1–13 Endurance	121 God Doesn’t Sleep
13	Matthew 11:2–15 John in Prison	2 Timothy 4:1–8; 16–18 Finished the Race	122 Pray for Peace
14	Matthew 12:1–14 Lord of the Sabbath	Titus 3:4–14 Not Because of Our Righteousness	123 Lord Have Mercy and/or 124 Our Help Is in the Lord
15	Matthew 13:24–30; 36–43 Parable of the Weeds	Philemon 1:1–25 Siblings of Christ and Each Other	125 Do Good and/or 126 Reap with Joy

Year Four, Second Semester

	Gospel	The Broader Story	Psalms
16	Matthew 14:13–21 Feeding the Five Thousand or 14:22–33 Jesus Walks on Water	Hebrews 4:1–13 Rest and Obedience	128 God’s Blessing
17	Matthew 15:1–20 Breaking Tradition	Hebrews 4:14–16; 10:19–25 Jesus the High Priest	130 Out of the Depths I Cry
18	Matthew 16:5–12 Pharisees and Sadducees or 16:13–20 Who Is the Son of Man?	Hebrews 11:1–3; 12:1–13 Faith/Running the Race	131 Like a Child with Its Mother
19	Matthew 17:24–27 Temple Tax	James 1:12–21 Temptations	133 Unity and 34 Praise and Blessing
20	Matthew 18:21–35 Forgiveness	James 2:14–26 Faith and Works	136 God’s Love Endures Forever
21	Matthew 19:16–26 Rich Young Man	James 5:7–20 Patience and Prayer	138 God Sees the Lowly
22	Matthew 20:1–16 First Will Be Last or 20:29–34 Two Blind Men Healed	1 Peter 4:12–19 Suffering	139 Fearfully and Wonderfully Made
23	Matthew 21:1–11 Triumphal Entry or 21:28–32 Parable of Two Sons	1 Peter 5:1–11 Humility/Casting Your Cares on God	141 Guard My Lips
24	Matthew 22:1–10 The Wedding Banquet or 22:34–40 Greatest Commandment	2 Peter 1:16–21 Eyewitnesses to God’s Majesty	144 God Provides and Protects
25	Matthew 23:1–12 Humble Yourself to Be Exalted	1 John 3:1–3 Children of God	145 Slow to Anger and Rich in Love
26	Matthew 24:32–44 Day the Lord Will Come	1 John 4:7–21 God Is Love	146 The Lord Sets Prisoners Free
27	Matthew 25:14–30 Parable of the Talents or 25:31–46 Sheep and Goats	Jude 1:17–25 The One Who Keeps You from Falling	147 God Numbers the Stars
28	Matthew 26:36–46 Prayer in Gethsemane or 26:47–56 Jesus Arrested	Revelation 2:1–7 or 3:14–22 First Love; Lukewarm	148 Praise the Lord from Heaven and Earth
29	Matthew 27:45–56 Death of Jesus or 27:57–61 Burial of Jesus	Revelation 7:9–17 From Every Nation	149 Sing a New Song
30	Matthew 28:1–10, 16–20 Resurrection/Great Commission	Revelation 21:1–7; 22–27 Beginning and the End	150 Let Everything That Has Breath

GERB: GATHER
ENCOUNTER
RESPOND
BLESS

GERB: Gather

The Basics

The conversation begins. God has called; we answer. As we gather, we focus our hearts and minds on the One who has called us together (Call to Worship). We take time to address those things that keep us from hearing God rightly—the distractions, the broken relationships, the secrets eating away at us (Call to Confession; Confession). Reminded of the fact that God loves us, forgives us, and wants to restore and repair our relationship (Assurance of Forgiveness), we acknowledge the peace that this brings (Passing of the Peace).

The words and prayers offered here are just the beginning. Any of these can be replaced by a song, a video, or a piece of art. Be creative and true to your community! More Calls, Confessions, and Assurances may be found in the Occasional Services and in the online *UWorship* forum at ukirk.org.

Call to Worship

1.

Leader: Lord, we come here
with lots of things on our minds.

People: But now we turn our focus to you.

Leader: Help us to put aside our assignments
and schedules.

People: Replace our worry with peace.

Leader: Guide us as we worship.

**People: Give us the ability to sing, pray,
and learn more about you, O God.**

2.

God, we've come here to give you our whole selves.

We trust you.

Let the troubles we face
fade into the background in this moment.

Clear our minds so we can focus on you.

Teach us your ways.

Show us your paths.

God, we've come here to give you our whole selves.

(Year 1, Week 20, Adapted from Ps. 25)

3.

Leader: Tests, temptations, and trials happen to us all.

People: We honor you.

Leader: We trust in your unfailing love.

People: We honor you.

Leader: Our hearts rejoice in your salvation.

People: We honor you.

Leader: We sing to you, Lord,
for you have been good to us.

(Year 1, Week 9, Adapted from Ps. 13)

4.

Leader: Lord, today we gather to witness you.

**People: You bring glory to the earth, from the deepest
valley to the highest mountain.**

Leader: Lord, today we gather to listen to you.

**People: You call us to go and bring good news
to your people.**

Leader: Lord, today we gather to praise you.

**People: You invite us to your table
and draw us into your presence.**

Leader: Lord, today we gather to worship you.

(Year 2, Week 14, Adapted from Isa. 6)

5.

You came to us, Word made flesh,
to show us what it means to love.

You came to us, Word made flesh,
to teach us how to serve.

You came to us, Word made flesh,
to clothe the naked and feed the hungry.

Come to us now, Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

Show us. Teach us. Clothe us. Feed us.

*(Year 4, Week 7 and Week 8, Adapted from Mark 6:6–11;
25–44)*

6.

We are in the city of the living God!

Yes, here, on campus—where we study, where we work,
where we write our papers and take our exams—

God is here!

This is a place from which the Lord will not be budged
nor shaken.

Let us give thanks with reverence and awe.

Let us worship God!

(Adapted from Heb. 12:28)

7.

Leader 1: We spend our days focused on so many things:
homework, schedules, unanswered questions.

Leader 2: We come to worship, setting those items aside.

Leader 3: Creator, help us to delight
in the work of your hands.
Christ Jesus, fill our days with peace
and grace we only find in you.
Holy Spirit, settle our unanswered questions
with renewed faithfulness.

Leader 4: We come to worship God!

8.

Leader: Gracious God, forever seeking us:

People: Open our minds to the truth of your care.

Leader: Open our hearts to the gentle power of your love.

People: Open our lips to share stories of faith.

Leader: Open our lives to do justice and show kindness.

**People: Open our mouths to sing boldly and loudly
your praises.**

9.

Leader: God calls us . . .

People: into a life that finds purpose in God's grace.

Leader: We know what that grace is
because of Jesus Christ . . .

**People: who brought life out of death, creation out of
nothingness, hope from despair.**

Leader: We gather here to witness to Jesus . . .

**People: to remind each other and everyone we meet
that Jesus brings good news.**

10.

Voice 1: "Come," says the Lord. "All you who are thirsty,
come to the waters."

Voice 2: "Come. Here there is bread and wine for your
soul."

Voice 3: "Come," says the Lord, "come be my people,
and I will be your God."

All: We are your people. You are our God.

Voice 1: Come, let us walk in the way of the Lord!

Voice 2: Let us worship God!

11.

We're standing in God's doorway,
our hands an inch from knocking.
We're responding to an invitation:
"Come on up to God's house!"
On the other side of this door,
we've been promised security, peace, and rest.
But we hesitate. Can it really be true?
The only way to know is to enter.
The door's unlocked. The table is ready.
God is waiting.
Let's go in.
(Year 4, Week 13, Inspired by Ps. 122)

Call to Confession

1.

Even as we enter into God's presence with praise,
we fall back, ashamed; we come up short.
Who can stand in the presence of the Lord?
No one—not one—is righteous before the Holy One.
But God remembers our creation
from just a handful of dust
and looks upon us with compassion.
Trusting in God's steadfast love,
let us give to the Lord all that gets in the way
of following him
as we confess our sins together.

2.

As believers in the Creator God
and followers of Jesus Christ,
we have a longing to confess our sins—
because sin is what gets in the way
of our relationships with God and one another.

So we come to this time of confession,
knowing and believing
that God's grace is already at work
even before we mumble a word.
For where sin increases,
grace increases all the more.

We humbly pray together now
and confess the burdens of our hearts.

-
- 3.**
 After Jesus' death, the disciples reverted back
 to their old ways,
 doubting and failing to see
 what was right in front of them.
- Did they forget what Jesus had accomplished?
 Did he not tell them many times about what was to come?
- The disciples' story is our story.
 In spite of promises we make,
 we revert back to old ways
 and forget all Jesus has accomplished.
 Yet, when we confess our forgetful ways,
 our short-sightedness,
 our many, many doubts,
 God has mercy upon us and shows us the error of our ways.
- Together with all of the disciples, we confess our sins.
- 4.**
 We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses:
 education majors, pre-med students,
 future engineers, counselors, athletes, artists,
 and those of us who don't yet know
 the path you have for us, God.
 We are people very different from one another,
 yet still we are called to remove everything that separates us,
 including the sin that so easily entangles.
 In faith, then, let us make our confession to God.
 (*Year 4, Week 18, Adapted from Heb. 12:1*)
- 5.**
 Voice 1: We are a pilgrim people on a journey
 deeper into the heart of God.
 Voice 2: But we stumble.
 Voice 3: We fall.
All: **Still God calls us to arise,**
 Voice 1: setting aside all that hinders us from following.
 Voice 2: Jesus says, "Come unto me,
 all you who are weary . . .
 Voice 3: and I will give you rest for your soul."
 Voice 1: You will run and not be weary . . .
 Voice 2: walk and not faint.
 Voice 3: Trusting in the mercies of the Lord, we confess our
 shortcomings before God and one another that
 we might be relieved of all that gets in the way of
 walking in the freedom of love.
 (*This can also be read by one voice.*)
- 6.**
 There are days and nights when we feel like we're drowning,
 and we can't come up for air.
 And sometimes, to be honest, what weighs us down
 is our own faithlessness or lack of belief.
 Our faults do not simply evaporate like water;
 we are drenched by their waves.
 Yet still God calls to us, beckoning us forth, directing paths,
 and calming storms.
- Together, we name those things which cause us to sink
 so we may walk freely towards God.
 (*Year 4, Week 10, Matt. 8:18–27*)
- 7.**
 If we pretend that we have it all together
 and haven't done anything wrong,
 we are delusional.
 We're not fooling God.
 But if we are honest and vulnerable,
 then God will be gracious and forgive us.
 Not only that,
 God will work on the inside to transform us
 so we might transform the world.
 As God's people,
 let us be honest about ourselves as we confess together.
 (*Adapted from 1 John 1:8–9*)
- 8.**
 Just like sheep wander away from their shepherd,
 we wander away from God.
 The paths we walk down and the decisions we make
 lead us further away.
 Yet still, God calls us:
 the college student, the professor, the freshman,
 the senior, the undecided, the PhD.
 We are called back into the fold,
 that we may learn the ways of the Lord.
 Together, we name how we, like sheep, have strayed.
- 9.**
 All too often we hide the ragged edges of our shattered lives—
 our guilt, our shame, our failures.
- But the Bible reminds us:
 "If your heart is broken, you'll find God right there;
 if you're kicked in the gut, he'll help you catch your breath."
 We bring our brokenness to God as we confess now.

10.

It is in our nature to hide our faults.
We want to cover up our wrongdoings to those around us so that they will only see the *best*,
the *smartest* and the *niciest* parts of us.

It's embarrassing that others know our shortcomings!

As humiliating as it may be, we are assured that:
"Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper,
but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy."*

Together, we make known our faults
so we may find mercy as we confess.
(Adapted from Prov. 28:13)

11.

As a mother does not forsake her nursing child,
so God will not abandon us, even in our weakness.
In the hope of this promise,
we can show God all our faults, all our failures,
all our wounds and bruises.
That's why we come to confess,
Because we know that, unlike anyone else,
God will not turn us away.

12.

Jesus says,
"Are you tired? Burned out? Worn out?
Come to me."
He promises rest.

When we come before God and confess our sins,
We are not only handing over those burdens,
We are asking Jesus to give us rest.
Listen to the Messiah.

In this time of confession,
allow him to take those burdens away.
Confess.

Prayer of Confession

1.

You, O God, offer us more than we could ever ask, blessing us beyond compare. You feed us with compassion, hold us up with hope, and clothe us with grace. You call us to feed others, hold others up, and clothe them with peace, joy, and love. But we worry about the food on our own plates before offering it to others. We pay more attention to our own survival than to the well-being of those around us. We ensure that our own backs are covered before protecting society's most vulnerable. Lord, all we can do is ask for your

forgiveness. We don't know why we do the things we do. All we know is that we're sorry; we want a clean slate. Help us to be messengers of humility, patience, and peace. Bind us together—with you and with one another—so that we may follow the risen Lord who feeds us and holds us up. **Amen.**
(Year 4, Week 8, Col. 3:12–17)

2.

Leader: We bless you, Holy God, with everything we have.
We bless your holy name.

People: You are the God who forgives us, redeems us, heals us. You are merciful and gracious, slow to anger and full of love. As far as the east is from the west, so far do you remove sin from us.

Leader: Sins for which we can't forgive ourselves, sins for which others cannot forgive us.

People: Forgive us, Lord, and show us how to forgive.

Leader: Free us from the things that get in the way—of our relationship with others, with ourselves, and with you. Cast out our sin and enter into our lives, that we might be your people grounded in love, grace, humility, and peace. **Amen.**

(Year 3, Week 27, Adapted from Ps. 103)

3.

Lord of all creation, you have called us each by name.

We are yours, and yet, what is yours is not ours.

We seek control where we have none.

We mock your work because we're too lazy
to pick up after ourselves.

We neglect our covenant with you.

We ignore your Word.

Grant us your grace and peace in the midst
of our brokenness. Forgive us, O Lord.

(Silent prayer)

Help us to trust more in you and your timing. Guide us to be good stewards of your creation. Teach us to delight in your promises to us. Inspire us, in all we do, to cling to your Word.

Amen.

4.

Voice 1: A scribe said to Jesus, "I will follow you wherever you go."

Jesus responded bluntly: "Following me isn't easy."

Voice 2: We want to follow you, Jesus.

But we, like your disciples,
struggle with doubt and fear.

Our doubt and fear take over, often clouding
our understanding of your miraculous love.

Voice 1: You asked them, “Why are you afraid, you of little faith?” You ask us the same thing today.

Voice 2: We confess our fear of the unknown.
We confess our need to be in control.
We confess our inability to trust you completely.

**All: Forgive us. Encourage us.
Teach us to follow,
even when we don’t think we can anymore.
Even though faith often is not easy, replace our
doubts with faithfulness, our fears with courage,
and our apathy with love. All in the pursuit of
Christ our Lord. Amen.**

(Year 4, Week 10, Matt. 8:18–27)

5.

Leader: Your story is one of redemption, holiness, salvation, and new beginnings: things that we need, things that we long for. Because we mess up. We fall down. We don’t know where to turn.

People: So we turn to you, Holy One. We turn to you for redemption. We place before you all those things—holy and unholy—that are part of our lives. We cry out to you, “Save us! Help us to start over! Because we can’t get out of our own way!”

Leader: Forgive us, God, as only you can. Help us to begin anew.

People: Not only that, but remind us of what it means to be your people: to love you and to love those around us—whether we want to or not—with our whole being.

Leader: That’s your call to us. That’s who you want us to be. People who follow the teacher, preacher, healer, and Savior, Christ the Lord. **Amen.**

6.

Lord, it’s plain and simple: our thoughts are not your thoughts, and our ways are different from your ways. Try as we may, we are unable to walk in perfect step with you. We put other things first: our social lives, our to-do lists, our addictions, our arrogance. And yet, you give us chance after chance to shape our thoughts and ways around you. Forgive us our misplaced priorities, O God. Shape our behavior and our lifestyles by the way, the truth, and the life of Jesus Christ, that we might better follow you. **Amen.**

7.

We should count ourselves lucky. We all get a fresh start. God holds nothing against us. We need hold nothing back. When we keep it all inside, we don’t feel good. The pressure never lets up; we feel dried up and unworthy. But then we can let it all out. We each can say without fear: “Here are my failures, God.”

Lord, hear our failures, our shortcomings, our guilt, our lack of faith. Hear us as we pray.

(Time of silent prayer and reflection.)

Thank you, Lord, for hearing our confession. Thank you for a grace unlimited by words and a love unknown apart from you. Help us to show that grace and love to others, that we may be known clearly as your people and disciples of your son, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

(Year 1, Week 27, Adapted from Ps. 32)

8.

Merciful God, forgive us for hoarding your blessings and not sharing them with others. We keep silent when a word is needed, and we speak when silence is the right course. Our hands remain idle and clean when they should be busy working with your people. Our hearts remain distant from your call to love one another.

Forgive us, bless us, encourage us, empower us. Make us bold disciples who graciously and authentically share the good news of Jesus Christ with others in our words and our actions—on campus and throughout the world. **Amen.**

9.

Searcher of hearts, you have known us from the beginning. You see in us more good and beauty than we have dared to believe. Forever you call us by name. But we have filled our lives with the sounds of the world. We have not loved and sought you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy. Lord have mercy and forgive us.

Gracious God, searcher of hearts, help us to know and to live in your forgiving light. Empower and embolden us to live in such a way that people in every corner of this campus—classrooms, residence halls, dining rooms, offices—would experience the joy and passion of your love through what we say and do. We ask in the name that is above all names, Jesus our Lord and Savior. **Amen.**

10.

God of compassion, you created the world through your communion of love, but we prefer to be lonely gods, living for ourselves. Our sin has misshapen the life you intend for us. We damage creation. We hurt one another. We ignore the ache of others. We beg you: free us from sin's grip with your prevailing love, that we might be your witnesses, testifying to your eternal love in all we do. God of justice and mercy, forgive us. **Amen.**

Assurance of Forgiveness

1.

By grace we have been saved through faith,
and this is not our own doing;
it is nothing less than God's gift for God's people!
It's not accomplished by our works,
so that we'd be able to brag about it.
No—we are who God has made us,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand
to be our way of life. Believe this good news!
We have been saved. We have been redeemed.
We have been forgiven.
(Year 4, Weeks 3 and 4, Adapted from Eph. 2:4–10)

2.

Christ died and was resurrected so that we
may have new life and be forgiven of our sins.
This is wonderful news!
Now go out and act as loved and forgiven people.
Be at peace and know that you're forgiven.
Through Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. **Amen.**

3.

Believe what the story says: The Lord will restore, support,
strengthen, and establish you.
We are forgiven, sisters and brothers.
To God be the power forever and ever. **Amen.**

4.

Why do we confess our sins?
Because God commands and calls us to be honest with
ourselves and with each other.
Because we need a reminder that we are all in the same boat.
Because confession helps us to recognize our brokenness.
But here is the great news that we all need to be
reminded of.
We mess up: God loves us anyway.
We ignore our faith: Jesus invites us into relationship.
We confess: and through Christ, we are forgiven. **Amen!**

5.

Leader: Everyone who is in Christ is a new creation.

People: Whatever was old is gone. New life has begun!

Leader: Through Christ, our relationship with God
has been restored.

**People: And our call is to restore our relationships
with one another.**

Leader: Friends, believe the Good News that comes from
God: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven.

People: Thanks be to God. Amen.

(Adapted from 2 Cor. 5:17–18)

6.

We have taken time to admit some things
that we want or need to change—
a mistake, some guilt, a lie, the brokenness of it all.
Something somehow has made us feel distant from God.
But in Jesus Christ, we can be assured:
We are not distant. We have been heard. We are loved.
And we are forgiven!

7.

Even while Jesus was on the cross,
beside two convicted thieves,
he said, "Father, forgive them,
for they do not know what they are doing."
But Jesus wasn't just talking about those two criminals;
he was talking about us.
That day, Jesus asked the Lord to forgive *us*.
We have been forgiven—
even before we knew we needed forgiveness.
This is the power of the Gospel! **Amen!**
(Year 3, Week 29, Luke 23:32–43)

8.

Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!
Not because of anything we have done,
but in spite of what we have done.

By grace, we are redeemed:
in spite of our selfishness,
in spite of scores we have to settle,
in spite of our stubbornness and arrogance,
in spite of ourselves!

Christ has died! Christ is risen! Christ will come again!
Amen.

9.

You have confessed your sins.
Now, close your eyes and take a moment
to picture the empty tomb.

(Pause for reflection.)

As you reflect, remember:
Jesus was taken to the tomb.
His body was laid there.
The grave sealed shut.
Yet the stone was rolled away.
The burial cloth was left inside.
The angels said, “He is risen.”
For us. For the world.

(Pause for reflection.)

The empty tomb.
It is the symbol of divine love.
It is the reminder of God’s grace and unending forgiveness.
We are free. We are reclaimed. We are forgiven. **Amen!**

10.

This is what good news means:
There is nothing you can do
to make God love you any more . . .
and there is nothing you can do
to make God love you any less.
You are beloved.
You are forgiven.

Passing the Peace

1.

You have heard the great news about being forgiven.
So now show what that means to you:
Share the peace that Christ gives you!
Pass the peace to those surrounding you!
Because immeasurable love
 is not something we keep to ourselves.
May the peace of Christ be with you all!

2.

Through his death,
Jesus demolished all the things that divide us,
the walls we put up to keep others out—
walls of hatred, walls of fear, walls of pride.
In his resurrection, he proclaimed peace—
peace to those both near and far,
friends, enemies, neighbors and rivals.
Through him, God dwells among us,
and we live into his peace.
May the peace of Christ be with you all!
(Year 4, Week 3, Eph. 2)

3.

When Jesus appeared to his disciples,
He said to them, “Peace be with you!”
Jesus granted them a blessing.
We are invited to share the same blessing,
reminding each other of the peace only Jesus can bring.
So, we say to one another exactly what Jesus said that day:
Peace be with you!

GERB: Encounter

The Basics

Called, gathered, forgiven and at peace, we can now spend time in God's presence, listening for what God might have to say to us as we encounter the Word. We let God know that we're listening and ask that God will help us to hear (Prayer for Illumination). Then we encounter God's Word to us in Scripture, song, a message, a devotion, a special time of prayer, a work of art. Having encountered the Word, we pray that God seals in our hearts what we have heard, seen, felt, and encountered (Prayer of Reflection).

The prayers offered here are just the beginning. Again, any of these can be replaced by a song, a video, or a piece of art. More prayers can be found in the Occasional Services and in the online *UWorship* forum at ukirk.org.

Prayer for Illumination

1.

God, our light and salvation,
one thing we ask of you, one thing we seek:
to dwell in your house as long as we live,
so we might behold your beauty,
and ask questions in your holy place.
Teach us your ways, O God, in ways
we can't be taught in the classroom.
Lead us on a level path no matter
the obstacles we encounter.
Send your Spirit to illumine us
and enable us to see your goodness
through the Word encountering us this day. **Amen.**
(*Year 1, Week 22, Ps. 27*)

2.

Jesus, Beloved Son of God,
reveal yourself to us,
beneath the bright wings of the Holy Spirit.
Dazzle us with your brightness,
overshadow us with your glory,
speak to us.

We are listening. **Amen.**

(*Year 2, Week 16, Mark 9:2-13*)

3.

Almighty God,
Come. Shake the heavens.
Rattle the earth.
Disturb the sea.

Fill this house with splendor.

Come, Holy Spirit.

Come dwell among us again, Holy Wisdom, Holy Word.

Show us what you are doing in our midst. **Amen.**

(*Year 3, Week 13, Hag. 2:1-9*)

4.

We fail to see the needs of those surrounding us.
In fact, we fail to see
when you stand right before us.

Open our eyes, Lord,
so we may catch a glimpse
of your walking in our midst:
on campus, in the cafeteria, during worship.

We fail to listen when you call.
Be it through your Word
or through someone standing
right next to us.

Open our ears, Lord,
so we can hear what you have to say:
in class, through prayer,
during conversations with friends.

By your Spirit, through your Word,
Help us to see and hear and know that we are loved.
Amen.

5.

Lord,
we have questions. So many questions.
We want to learn more about you,
yet we don't know where to begin.
Help us to find a starting place in your story.
Through it, shed light upon our darkness,
our wanderings, our doubts. Settle within us
the discomfort that comes with the questions.
Calm our deepest fears and anxieties as we
find root in the Word told to us this day. **Amen.**

6.
Jesus, unexpected guest,
you come like a thief in the night,
encountering us in ways we could never anticipate.

Wake us up. Make keen our senses.
Arouse our suspicions of your presence among us.

For we know that heaven and earth will pass away,
the new heaven and new earth are coming.
Yet your words—
the very words we hear this day—
endure forever. **Amen.**

(Year 4, Week 26, Matt. 24:32–44)

7.
All-knowing God,
your Word is a lamp unto our feet
and a light to our path.
Through your Spirit:
Give us eyes to spot where you are—
here in *this* place.
Give us ears that strain for your voice
of encouragement.
Give us minds to engage your challenge in our lives.
Give us hearts of compassion, empathy, and love for
our sisters and brothers around us. **Amen.**

(Year 4, Week 10; Ps. 119:105)

8.
Gracious God,
we long to experience
the world as you created it to be.

In our world, on our campus, in our lives—we see your
reign having already begun but not yet fully realized.

By the power of your Holy Spirit, open your Word
to us so we can experience a new world of possibility
opened before us. **Amen.**

9.
Living God,
our souls thirst for living water.
Open our hearts and minds to your Word this day,
so that, like the Samaritan woman,
we have a grace-filled encounter with you,
the Living God.

(Year 1, Week 5; John 4:1–29)

10.
Holy One,
fill our hearts and minds
with your abiding peace.
Quiet the busyness and anxieties that race in our minds.
By the power of your Holy Spirit, speak as your Word is
proclaimed. **Amen.**

11.
Lord, as we read Scripture, we admit:
Sometimes we don't understand the stories
and the passages we read.
Sometimes we ask questions of it and are left searching.
Sometimes, we simply don't know what to say.
So now, we ask for help from your Holy Spirit:
help for understanding, help for our questions,
help to find words,
and help for how to apply your Word to our lives.
For guidance and wisdom, we give you thanks.
Amen.

Prayer of Reflection

1.
A Word has been spoken.
It has encountered us,
disturbed us,
embraced us,
moved us.
Not because we deserve it or are entitled to it.
No—it's called grace.
That's why we listen.
That's why we look.
That's why we believe.
That's why we bear witness.

So now what?

A Word has been spoken.
We encounter.
We disturb.
We embrace.
We move.

2.

Lord, we all are students.

Some of us freshmen, sophomores, juniors, seniors.

Some of us on course for master's degrees
or doctorates.

Some of us not in school, at all. Those
years are behind us.

Yet still, we all are students,
listening to the Teacher's Word.

Now, having heard the Word for the day,
the challenge is before us:

like any good lesson, we apply it.

As your students, inspire us to open our hands and hearts,
that this Word may not become lost in all the rigors of life.
Instead, empower us to become teachers ourselves, that
those surrounding us would be drawn into our words—
your Word—by the power of your Spirit. In Christ's name.

Amen.

3.

God, set your Word in us,

like a seed that needs time and darkness to grow,

like a song we can't get out of our heads,

like a conversation with a good friend.

May what we have read and heard today
surprise us with encouragement

at just the right moment,

haunt us until we have to share it with others,

comfort us when we feel alone.

When we are distracted by all that clutters our lives—

yesterday's party,

today's argument,

tomorrow's test—

and the struggles that crowd our hearts—

worry for sick loved ones,

uncertainty about our future,

anxiety about global tragedies—

speak to us with your still, small voice,

whisper hope into our lives,

murmur gladness into our hearts,

mutter love into our souls. **Amen.**

(Year 1, Week 25, 1 Kgs. 19:3–15)

4.

We are not where we started. Things have changed.

Our lives are different.

New truths.

New understanding.

New ways of believing.

We can't go back. Not with this Word within us.

We have been changed. So as we go . . .

to our apartment,

to the library,

to the coffee shop,

to the bar,

lead us into this new truth, this new understanding, this
new way of believing so things will change, so lives will be
different, so we will not return to where we once were.

Not with this Word within us. Not as we go. **Amen.**

5.

You who count the stars and give them all their names.

You who heal the brokenhearted and bind up their wounds.

You gather us all together:

the introvert and extrovert,

the included and the exiled,

the double majors and the undeclared,

the confident and the insecure.

To each of us, you offer a Word. Words even.

Sometimes we understand them.

Other times we do not.

Yet still you offer. Still you inform our misunderstanding
with wisdom beyond measure.

Bind up our brokenness . . .

heal our wounded hearts . . .

 speak words through your people . . .

so we may gather around your Word together as we have
this day and worship you—the counter of stars and giver
of names. **Amen.**

(Year 4, Week 27, Ps. 147)

6.

Leader: We read the words of Scripture,
and they are good.

And yet, they are not just words.

They are infinitely more.

They witness. They speak. They elude.

They live and breathe, finding life

and breath in Jesus, the living Word.

**People: The Word is light in the darkness.
The Word is Truth.
The Word is often misunderstood and rejected.
The Word is full of grace.**

Leader: We know the Word is true
because we know Jesus Christ.
The Word made flesh.
The Word living, breathing, dying, rising.
The Word as we are meant to see and hear it.
The Word through which we interpret
the letters on the page
and the world in which we live.

**People: May the words of Scripture
that we have just read,
and may the Living Word, Jesus Christ,
enlighten our lives,
offer new truths,
fill us with grace,
and be accepted with love.
Amen.**

7.

Lord, we pray:
Bless us with unhardened hearts.
Equip us with unending grace.
Empower us with unconditional love.
With these divine gifts in hand,
may we take your Word now and,
with the guidance of your Spirit,
apply it to our lives.

Amen.

8.

After hearing the teachings of Jesus, the disciples said,
“This teaching is difficult; who can accept it?”

The teaching *is* difficult.
We don't always accept it.

But we pray now that our faith will keep us grounded
as we wrestle with these words.

We pray together that the Holy Spirit
will wipe away all doubt.

Because, after all, Christ also said,
“The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.”

Help us learn from these words and accept with boldness
that they are truth, and life, and the essence of our faith.

Amen.

(Adapted from John 6:60–68)

GERB: Respond

The Basics

Having encountered God, we now respond. Through creeds and prayers, we tell God and one another the stories that remind us both who we are in God and why we trust God (Affirmation of Faith). We cry out to God with thanksgiving and with sadness, with joys and concerns (Prayers of the People). We offer everything we are to God—our selves, our concerns, our time, our money, our gifts, and our service (Invitation to Offering and Prayer of Dedication). We commit or recommit our lives to the family that is God's people through a ritual celebrating our common participation in Christ's liberating death and resurrection (Baptism), and we are invited to a meal of remembrance at God's table (Communion).

As was the case with Gather and Encounter, the liturgies included in this section may be replaced by a song, a video, or a piece of art. Also, take note that, for Presbyterians, there exists a collection of creeds and confessions contained in the *Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Common Worship*, from which shorter phrases or particular brief affirmations can be excerpted. More invitations, prayers, and affirmations can be found in the Occasional Services and in the online *UWorship* forum at ukirk.org.

Affirmation of Faith

1.

O Lord, we hear the stories of Scripture, and sometimes we question them.

Like Moses getting water from a rock.

Instead of doubt, we want to say, "We believe!"

We believe: Moses was called by you, despite his insecurities.

We believe: You empowered Moses
to lead the people out of Egypt.

We believe: You fed the hungry Israelites
with manna and quail.

We believe: You provided water from a rock
for a thirsty people.

These stories are strange and crazy.

We believe: This miraculous story demonstrates your power,
your glory, your love.

You provide.

We believe.

Help our unbelief.

(Year 1, Week 10, Num. 20:1–13)

2.

Leader: In the midst of our overstuffed schedules,
when we are pulled in a thousand directions
and have a million things to do,
the Bible reminds us that we are called
to look beyond ourselves,
to do nothing out of selfishness,
and to walk beside each other in love.

We do this because we follow Jesus:

**People: who, though he was in the form of God,
didn't think of equality with God
as something to hold onto
for his own advantage.**

**Instead, he gave up everything,
became a servant,**

and was born as a tiny baby.

**Then he humbled himself even more,
and became obedient to God
even to the point of death—**

death on a cross.

In response to this obedience,

**God lifted Jesus to the highest place of honor,
giving him a name that deserves respect
more than any other,**

**so that the mere mention of Jesus' name
would one day cause everyone—**

**in heaven, on earth and under the earth—
to fall to their knees in awe and wonder.**

**Because Jesus humbled himself,
everyone will come to know**

that Jesus is Lord

to the glory of God. Amen.

(Year 4, Week 6, Phil. 4:1–11)

3.

Jesus said to Martha,

"I am the resurrection and the life.

Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live,
and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.

Do you believe this?"

Do I believe this?

Do you believe this?

Do we believe this?

She responded,

"Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah,

the Son of God,

the one coming into the world."

We respond with the same faithfulness
and assurance of Martha:
Yes, Lord, I believe.
(Year 1, Week 15, John 11)

4.

Even if we are faithless,
God remains faithful.
This is a covenant promise.
This is a solid foundation on which we stand.
Remember Christ died so we might receive forgiveness
and salvation.
We are forgiven. **Amen.**
(Year 4, Week 12, 2 Tim. 2:8–19, adapted)

5.

The Lord's Prayer—based on the ecumenical version

Leader: When we say, “Our father in heaven,”

**People: we remember that we're not alone
on this spiritual journey,
that we pray together,
and trust in God together.**

Leader: When we say, “hallowed be your name,”

**People: we remember that God can be beautiful to us,
can cause us to wonder and sing with joy,
if only we open our eyes to who God is
and what God has done.**

Leader: When we say, “your kingdom come,”

**People: we remember that the chaos of our lives,
our uncertainty about the future,
is not the final word.
Though it doesn't always seem like it,
God is in control
and God will make things right.**

Leader: When we say, “your will be done,
on earth as in heaven,”

**People: we remember that our response to what God has
done and is doing
should flow through our whole lives,
wherever we are, whatever we are doing—
in the dorm room and the classroom,
at mealtime and party time,
at home and at school,
when we've been up all night
and when we sleep in late.**

Leader: When we say, “Give us today our daily bread,”

**People: we remember that we depend on God
for everything,
that God cares about our day to day living,
about our health, about our bodies.
God loves us.**

Leader: When we say, “Forgive us our sins as we forgive
those who sin against us,”

**People: we remember that Jesus' life, death,
and resurrection
aren't just events that happened long ago.
They are God's message of forgiveness for
us here and now.**

**Whatever mistakes we've made,
however many times we've turned our backs
on God,
whomever we've hurt
through our actions or our words,
God forgives us.
And God desires for us
to mend our relationships with others.**

Leader: When we say, “Save us from the time of trial, and
deliver us from evil,”

**People: we remember that sin and evil do exist,
that we mess up our relationships
with God and others,
that we participate in systems
that leave people out
and knock people down,
that we all too often ignore the people
who are left out and knocked down,
that we, too, face abuse and neglect
and suffering,
and that God desires to rescue us and free us
from all of this.**

Leader: When we say, “For the kingdom, the power, and
the glory are yours,
now and forever,”

**People: we remember that God is more powerful
than anything we face,
that God showed this power
in the weakness of the cross
and an empty tomb,
and that we look forward to the love of God
bringing everything to completion
and making all things new.**

*If this seems too long for your ministry, you might consider
addressing one phrase per week for a seven- or eight-week series.*

6.

When Jesus first appeared to his disciples,
he said, "Peace be with you."

After he realized they were startled, frightened,
and even doubtful that it was truly him,
Jesus said, "Look at my hands and my feet.
Touch me and see."

It was then that his disciples were filled with joy
and amazement.

Here he was, the risen Lord, sending them out
to tell the world about him.

We cannot physically see Jesus in the room.
We cannot actually touch his hands and feet.
And yet, Jesus is here, among us.
The risen Lord lives in and through us.

After he spoke to his disciples, Jesus lifted up his hands
and blessed them.

In doing that, he also blesses us.

As his people, we respond in the same way they did:
with praise, with joy, and with a willingness to tell people
about Jesus Christ.

7.

**People: When Jesus walked the earth,
he proclaimed who he was.**

Leader: Christ said, "I am the Bread of Life."

**People: Our belief in him gives us nourishment
for living.**

Leader: Christ said, "I am the Light of the World."

People: Our belief in him allows us to shine in darkness.

Leader: Christ said, "Before Abraham was, I am."

**People: Our belief in him means we understand Jesus
as the fulfillment of God's covenant promises.**

Leader: Christ said, "I am the gate."

**People: Our belief in him shows us who God is and
continually calls us out into the world.**

Leader: Christ said, "I am the Good Shepherd."

**People: Our belief in him signifies that we will
follow him and live under his protection.**

Leader: Christ said, "I am the resurrection and the life."

**People: Our belief in him grants us eternal life,
knowing he laid down his life for us.**

Leader: Christ said, "I am the Way, the Truth,
and the Life."

**People: Our belief in him gives us direction,
true understanding, and freedom from sin.**

Leader: Christ said, "I am the true vine."

**People: Our belief in him gives us purpose
and a divine connection to our Savior.**

Leader: We all have our differences, but we proclaim
these truths just as Christ proclaimed them to
his followers.

**People: We believe Jesus is our living Lord who
nourishes, shines, fulfills, calls,
protects, saves, directs, and frees us. Amen!**

8.

Who made the heavens and the earth? Who gave to
everything its place? Who calls us each by name? God the
Everlasting. God the Creator. God, whose strength knows
no bounds, whose understanding is beyond comprehension.
God, who strengthens the weak and empowers the
powerless. There will be those days and nights when we will
meet our limits—be it because of stress in the classroom or
problems in our personal lives. There will be those days and
nights when we will want to give up and turn away from
everything. But when those times come, we wait. We wait.
And we believe. And we hope. Because God the Everlasting,
God the Creator, whose strength knows no bounds and
whose understanding is beyond comprehension, will lift us
up. And we will fly with wings like eagles. We will run and
not be weary. We will walk and not faint.

(Adapted from Isa. 40)

Prayers of the People

1.

God, we come to you now,
to tell you what's on our minds and in our hearts.

When we actually pause to notice the landscape,
enjoy the sunshine,
or be refreshed by the rain, we can't help but remember you
as our Creator God.

When we see people are not caring for your creation,
we are heartbroken.

When we recognize our own part in abuse of this world,
we are ashamed.

We pray now for this earth,
and ask for your blessing upon it.

Guide those who are working to protect wildlife,
restore forests, and preserve the oceans.

We cry out for those who suffer because of war.
God, protect them.

Watch over the refugee. Heal the injured. Save the abused.
We pray for those who are convinced
that war is the only way.

Heal their hearts and show them the way to peace.
Give compassion to those who fight.
Open the eyes of those blinded by violence.

We lift up our towns, cities, neighborhoods, and families.
Watch over these places in our lives.
Shine your light in the dark places
and help reveal the needs of our communities.
Encourage us to reach out to our neighbors,
not just to live behind closed doors.
Heal the brokenness that exists in families
due to addictions, abuse, neglect, and stress.
Show each of us how we can bear your light where we live.

Lord, we pray for our campus and for our role here.
Help us to draw closer to you everyday.
Give us a new desire to live our lives as your followers.
May our actions, our words, and our choices
reflect our beliefs.
Show us how our studies can impact this world
for your glory.
Send us out onto this campus as ones called
to demonstrate your love.
Lord, we thank you.
Thank you for loving us, despite our flaws and insecurities.
Thank you for bringing us together for a common purpose.
Thank you for this time to pray together as your people.
Most of all, thank you for your Son, Jesus Christ.
It is in his name that we pray.

Amen.

2.

Leader: Lord, before we, your people, pray together,
we pause for a moment
to focus our hearts and minds on you.

(Pause for a moment of silence.)

We pray to you now with honesty.

**People: God, we aren't always sure you hear us.
We want so badly to understand
you and your will—
not only for us, but also for this world.
God, what is your plan?
Why don't you give clear answers?
How could we possibly be a part
of your kingdom here on earth?
We ask with boldness, and pray for the patience
to wait for answers.**

**God, our hearts are overwhelmed.
So many people we know are hurting.
They need the healing we read about
in the Bible.
They struggle with addiction, insecurity,
and brokenness.
They suffer from senseless violence and abuse.
People across the world are arrested, beaten,
and killed.
They don't know where to turn.
God, why does this happen?
How can this type of suffering continue?
Why don't you step into these situations
the way we want you to?
In the silence, we lift up the names of those
individuals who are on our hearts and minds:**

(Pause for a moment of silence.)

Leader: Lord, we pray to you now with hope.

**People: We have hope in the saving grace of Jesus Christ!
We have hope because your Son is working
in and through each of us!
We have hope in your forgiveness!
God, remind us of our hope,
even in the midst of despair, heartbreak,
and stressful situations.
May we hold each other up,
not only when we come together,
but through daily reminders, prayers,
and affirmations.
Thank you, Lord,
for your love for us made real in Christ.
May we embody Christ in all we do.
Amen.**

3.

*Explain that the leader will introduce a topic for prayer which
will be followed by a time for people to lift up specific related
situations either aloud or in silence.*

Leader: God, we lift up to you those who are far from
home, those you have gathered from the east, west,
north and south, from all around the world, and
those lost in the wilderness, lonely and afraid . . .
(Pause) O God . . .

**People: Give them a space, a city in the desert, a broad
place in which to thrive. Help them to find
their way.**

Leader: God, we bring before you the hungry and thirsty, those saddled with financial debt and those suffering the weight of shame, those with empty stomachs and those with hollow hearts . . .

(Pause) O God . . .

People: Plant them in the rich soil of your Spirit, fill their lives with people who will share their hearts, homes, and tables.

Leader: God, we lay at your feet the prisoners of this world, the truly guilty and the wrongly accused, the inmates behind bars and the loved ones chained to addictions and depression or trapped in abuse . . .

(Pause) O God . . .

People: Deliver them from their desperate circumstances. Bring them out of the shadows. Shatter their chains and split their cages in two. Show them where your Spirit lives, for where the Spirit is, there is freedom.

Leader: God, give into your hands those who have traveled far from what they know is right, who have wandered off the path they had been following and are lost . . . *(Pause)* O God . . .

People: Wrestle order from their chaos. Reveal to them your faithful love. Open their eyes to your grace and lead them onto your paths.

Leader: God, we entrust to you those staggering through the storms of life, shipwrecked on the shore of illness, death, grief and loss . . . *(Pause)* O God . . .

People: Quiet the storm to a whisper; calm the waves to a hush. Break through the clouds with hope. Stand with them and help us to stand.

Leader: We pray all of these things, confident of your love, grateful for your faithfulness, and in awe of all you've already done. **Amen.**

(Year 3, Week 30, Inspired by Ps. 107)

4.

O God, bless those who have no hope;
make your home with them.

Bless those who grieve; strengthen them with gladness
in the midst of heartache.

Bless those who have been brought low;
remind them that they are your children.

Bless those who long for things to be made right;
fill them with a vision of your future.

Bless those who hunger and thirst; move us to share.

Bless those who show mercy;
may they experience your grace.

Bless those who work for peace;
assure them that they are not alone.

Bless those who are harassed for doing what is right;
grant them the courage of obedience.

Bless those who face insults, lies, and gossip
for who you have made them;
fill them with a strong core of joy. Amen.

(Year 4, Week 6, Inspired by Matt. 5:1–12)

5.

The world is full of people, Lord:

People who need encouragement, support, love, and prayer.

People who are alone or sink into the depths of depression
and despair.

People who have cause to celebrate and rejoice.

The world is full of people, Lord:

People we know well who need prayer: our classmates,
roommates, best friends, enemies.

People we don't know well who need prayer: anonymous
faces we walk past on the sidewalk, those who serve us
in restaurants, those who tend to us in grocery stores,
those we sit next to in class.

The world is full of people, Lord. Whether known or
unknown by us, they are known intimately by you.

Bless this world full of people. Bless the people within
it. Bless all who breathe on this earth with successes
to celebrate and struggles to navigate. Bless us, Lord.

Amen.

6.

*Each time, pause for silence or time for people to say
prayers aloud.*

Lord, we come before you as your people,
full of hope and gratitude,
carrying doubts and fears.

We take this time now to voice the things that are on our
hearts.

For the students, faculty, and staff at our campus . . .

For people who are hungry right here in our community . . .

For those who are sick and in need of healing . . .

For friends who don't believe you love them
unconditionally . . .

For the leaders of our state and nation . . .

For the needs in our world . . .

Lord, hear these prayers that we have lifted up to you,
prayers for your people,
for your world, for our community and campus,
even for ourselves. Hear us. **Amen.**

7.

God, you call us to prayer.
Throughout the Scriptures,
we read about your people praying.
The Israelites cried out for you to rescue them from slavery.
You sent them Moses.
Hannah wept, asking you to remember her.
You gave her a son.
King Solomon asked for a discerning heart
to govern your people.
You gave him the gift of wisdom.
Esther declared a fast and prayed for favor with the king.
You spared her people.
The disciples Peter and John prayed for boldness.
You shook the ground and filled them with the Holy Spirit.
An unnamed woman poured out her brokenness
at Christ's feet.
He forgave her sins.
Jesus himself prayed for us to be followers
who are continually sent.
You send us as you sent your Son.

O Lord, help us to be people of prayer,
willing to cry out to you,
humbly naming our needs,
desiring to be filled with the Holy Spirit,
and constantly praying for one another's ability to serve you.

We take a moment now to reflect on:
where we need to give or receive forgiveness.

(Pause for a moment of silence.)

The people we know who are in need of your grace
and healing.

(Pause for a moment of silence.)

Our campus, our community, our nation, and our world.

(Pause for a moment of silence.)

Almighty, attentive God,
Thank you for being a personal Lord
whom we can approach
with honesty, with frustration, and with hope.
We pray these things together, as your grateful people.

Amen.

Invitation to Offering

1.

Honor the Lord with who you are,
and with the best that you can do;
then, like a barn at harvest,
your life will have room to welcome God's plenty.
(Year 2, Week 9, Prov. 3:9–10)

2.

Friends, God shows us mercy.
How should we respond?
By pouring out our lives recklessly.
By following God into uncharted waters.
By letting God shape us into something different
from the world around us.
This is what it means to be spiritual;
this is what it means to worship:
to offer ourselves to God.
(Year 3, Week 24, Inspired by Rom. 12:1)

3.

Whatever you do,
put your whole self into it;
do it for God:
if you are an encourager, build others up;
if you are a giver, show generosity;
if you are a leader, be diligent;
and if you are compassionate, work with a glad heart.
Whatever you do,
put your whole self into it,
and do it for God.
(Year 3, Week 24, Rom. 12:8)

4.

Scripture says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above."
But what does that really mean?
It means we can only give credit to God
for things like wisdom, patience, and unfailing love.
What are we to give back in response?
We are asked to use these gifts
for the good of the world around us.
Lord, we offer these things to you now.
(Year 4, Week 19, Jas 1:17)

5.

In the midst of struggle,
wrestling with doubt and confusion,
pinned to the ground and breathless,
we ask God for a blessing.
In our emptiness, we feel like we have nothing to give.

Then God reminds us that we are never worthless,
that we can always offer something—
even the vulnerability of welcoming someone
into our emptiness.
So we find blessing in being honest,
in standing side by side with others in need,
in volunteering what we have and in sharing what we lack.
Let's come to God with all we have and all we are.
(*Year 1, Week 3, Gen. 32:22–32*)

6.

What does it mean to offer something?
To sacrifice a belonging you would rather keep?
To freely give a gift?
When we, as followers of Christ,
talk about offering,
we have to consider that God is actually asking us
to offer ourselves,
not just things we own.

In this time of offering,
take your mind off of material things to give away.
Instead, think about how you can offer
your time,
your imagination,
your education,
your compassion,
your plans for the future.

Willingly give from your heart.
God will receive it.

7.

When Jesus was in Jerusalem, he sat down
near the treasury at the temple,
the place where people made their offerings.
He noticed rich people putting in large sums of money.
But then, a poor widow came by,
and she put in two small copper coins.
They were worth about a penny.

Jesus called his disciples over and said to them,
“Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more
than all those who are contributing to the treasury.
For all of them have contributed out of their abundance;
but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had,
all she had to live on.”

You are invited to give now,
not only out of abundance.
Give all you have.

8.

Giving requires us to place something
in the hands of someone else.
When we give an offering, we place what we have
into God's loving hands.
Knowing this, we are asked to give freely, out of love,
just as God did when we were given Jesus Christ.
God gave out of love.
So shall we.

Prayer of Dedication

1.

Gracious God,
receive now our offering
which is just a portion of the blessings you have given to us.
Use these gifts,
and use each one of us as a living offering to you,
for your glory and for your work of healing and wholeness
in our world and on our campus. **Amen.**

2.

All-powerful God,
use these gifts,
use our lives,
and use this faith community
to further your reach and reign
in a hungry and hurting world.
May your power be at work in and through us
so that we will do justice, love mercy,
and humbly serve others
in our classrooms, dorm rooms, athletic fields,
and workplaces.
Use us right here, on our campus and in our community.
Amen.

3.

This is what we have to offer.
Lord, take these gifts.
Lord, use these gifts.
Lord, bless these gifts.
This is what we have to offer.
Amen.

4.

God, we realize that what we have to offer
is not nearly enough.
But we give anyway, as a response to all you do
and have done for us.
Please take what we have given, and bless it.

Bless us now too,
so that we can continue to give even more.
Thank you for receiving this offering, just as it is,
and for receiving us, just as we are.
In the name of Christ we pray. **Amen.**

5.
Just as we dedicate these gifts to you, Lord,
we dedicate our lives.
Use these gifts and use our lives, we pray.
Our hope is that these offerings
will make a difference in our community,
especially in the lives of those
who need your grace the most.
In Christ's name we pray. **Amen.**

The Sacraments

The Sacraments of Baptism (or the Reaffirmation of the Baptismal Covenant) and Communion are among the most significant ways we can respond as the body of Christ. Although these sacraments may be less common in the life of a campus ministry, they are an important part of what we do as Christ's followers. It is recommended that worship leaders check with their sponsoring congregation or ministry board before baptizing a member of a worshiping community or administering the Lord's Supper (regarding, say, permission to administer the sacraments or the asking of any required questions prior to baptism).

BAPTISM

Presentation

1.
Scripture tells us that there is one body, one Spirit, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God who is above all and through all and in all.

We, too, are one—each one of us called and claimed by God through the Sacrament of Baptism.

Wherever we come from: east, west, north, south, whichever fraternity or sorority we're in, whichever residence hall we call home, whichever major or minor we've chosen—that may be part of who we are. But it's not the whole story. We may have bad memories, difficult histories, pasts from which we cannot escape. But that's not the whole story. We may have fears and doubts, victories and celebrations. But that's not the whole story.

No—our story is wrapped up in a God who claims us in these waters.

Furthermore, God cleanses us in these waters. God reminds us that nothing—not even the stain of the sins that haunt us—separates us from the divine love offered to us. So come to these waters and remember that we are called, claimed, and cleansed. Remember that we are loved.

2.
When Jesus was a young man,
at the beginning of his active ministry,
he went down to the Jordan River.
There, a man named John the Baptist was calling for people
to turn their lives around,
to prepare the way for the Lord.
John was baptizing people,
washing them as a sign of a fresh start.
Jesus asked John to baptize him, too.
As Jesus emerged from the water, God spoke, saying:
“This is my beloved son, with whom I am well-pleased.”
In our baptism, God claims us as children, too,
welcoming us into a family of love.

In baptism, we are also joined with Christ's death,
and we participate in Christ's resurrection.
Baptism gives us a fresh start, making a bold statement:
Our old life is gone.
Our new life has begun.
Whether we come young or old, weak or strong,
broken and bruised,
we emerge from the water
like newborn children,
innocent and loved without condition.

Thanksgiving over the Water

Prior to this baptismal prayer, you may present the person being baptized and ask any required questions of him/her and/or of those present. This may include any questions required by polity, a series of renunciations, and/or a profession of faith. Then, following the baptismal prayer, you may administer the baptism. The Book of Common Worship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a good resource for guidance on liturgy, order of worship, and any questions that may need asking.

1.
Holy One, we remember. We remember the beginning,
when you created the heavens and the earth. The earth was
a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep.
Then you called into the expanse of nothingness, and a
wind, mighty and gusting, swept over the face of the waters.

At the very dawn of creation, you spoke, and the waters
divided—water below parted from water above, called

“heaven.” You spoke, and a wellspring of holiness sprang up. In the days of Noah, water swallowed the world in flood. Setting a rainbow in the sky, you made a covenant with humanity. The flood subsided, and the grime of sin was washed away, just as baptism puts an end to sin and offers new life.

You speak, and sin is washed away.

In the days of old, Pharaoh ordered the death of male Hebrew children, but Moses’ mother waded to her waist and set her son adrift in a basket. Pharaoh’s daughter drew him to safety from the water. Moses led your people through the waters of the Red Sea from slavery to the Promised Land.

You speak—to mothers and captives, to leaders, to teenagers. And in the waters, we are set free to live into your promised hope.

In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus was baptized by John. The Holy Spirit landed on him like a dove. You spoke, and said, “This is my child, in whom I am well pleased.”

When we gather at the font, we encounter your promises. You speak.

And you say to us, you say to me, “This is my child, in whom I am well pleased.”

You speak, and we thank you for your spoken promises. With gratitude, we call upon your Holy Spirit to bless these waters for baptism as you continue to speak to us this day and every day. **Amen.**

2.

Holy Spirit, we call upon you now to bless this water, and through that blessing, may this water be changed so that it will serve a new, divine purpose.
Bless [Name] with this water.

Creator God, we thank you for this water that will, with your power, be a seal and demonstration of your grace, and will not only cleanse, but will revive your servant, [Name]. Claim and embrace [him/her] with this water.

Blessed Jesus, we have come together as your followers to celebrate this sacrament. Thank you for your presence here, and thank you for the ways you are already working in [Name]’s life. Encourage [him/her] with this water.

We pray all of this in the name of the Triune God—Three in One, **Amen.**

Remembering Our Baptism

It is also possible that a student be brought before a congregation/group to reaffirm his/her baptismal vows. Again, this may include questions required by polity, a series of renunciations, and/or a profession of faith. Here, the Book of Common Worship of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is again a good resource for guidance on liturgy, order of worship, and any questions that may need asking.

1.

We are washed clean—
of all that weighs us down,
of all that makes us feel guilty,
of all that causes our minds to stir
with anxiety and fear.

We are washed clean—
of all that trips us up,
of all that covers our spirits in grime,
of all that has us feeling like we’re by ourselves.

We are washed clean—
of all that exhausts us,
of all that depletes us,
of all that haunts us.

We are washed clean. And we remember why.
Because of these waters.

So, as we are washed clean yet again,
help [Name] to remember.

That [he/she] may be renewed.

That [he/she] may be restored.

That [he/she] may be reassured that, in these waters,
we find life.

Again and again.

2.

Lord—it is easy to forget.
With all of the papers and the tests,
all the demands on our social lives and our family
lives.

It’s easy to forget about these waters.

It’s easy to forget what they mean.

It’s easy to forget, even though they never really go away.

So here we are, with the waters before us. As they
always are.

Together we remember:

that your claim upon us is eternal,
that your call to us is unceasing,
that your connection with us—
like these waters—never rinses away.

Renew us all as we remember the vows of our baptisms:
that our community is set apart,
that we are a people who never let go of one
another,
that we are part of something more than
ourselves,
and that we are marked as your own no
matter where life takes us.

COMMUNION

Invitation

1.
We are hungry.
We come searching for something to fill us.
We have tasted a crumb of God's goodness,
and we want more.
Jesus meets us here.
He says: "Do not work for the food that perishes,
but for the food that endures for eternal life."
"I am the bread of life," he says.
"Whoever comes to me will never be hungry,
and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."
This is God's table.
Jesus invites us to trust him
and to share the feast he has prepared.
(*Year One, Week 8, John 6:22–51*)

2.
Friends, come to God's table.
Christ has prepared it for us.
He invites anyone and everyone to trust him
and to taste and see that God is good.
So come.
(*Year One, Week 29, Ps. 34*)

3.
We have received an invitation
to come to this table of communion.
To come and experience
this visible sign of our Lord's invisible grace.
We eat together at this table.
A table that does not discriminate.
A table that allows us to come as we are.
A table that says, "You are members of one body."
We have received an invitation
and we humbly accept it.
And now we participate in this sacrament
that reminds us of our Lord's love and glory
and brings us together as those who are one in Christ.

Great Thanksgiving

1.
Leader: The Lord be with you.
People: And also with you.
Leader: Lift up your hearts.
People: We lift them to the Lord.
Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.
Leader: It is right to thank you, God.
You created the earth and the sea.
You formed the land and gathered the waters.
Rain, light, dirt—you made them.
Grain and grape—you cause them to grow.
When your people, the Israelites,
wandered in the desert,
you gave them manna, bread enough for each day.
You provided water from a rock.
You send your rain on the just and the unjust alike.
When we aren't faithful, you remain faithful.
But you do call us to faithfulness.
You call us to holiness.
You call us to love the poor,
the orphans, the widows,
the oppressed, and the stranger in our midst.
You call us to trust you.
And so, with all your faithful people,
with choirs of angels,
in every language of the earth, we sing:
**People: Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is the one who comes
in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**
Leader: Your word became flesh—Jesus Christ.
He came and lived among us.
He challenges us to return to you;
he calls us to bring healing, hope, and hospitality
to the sick, the hungry, the outcast, the oppressed.
In love for us, his body was broken on the cross,
his blood was spilled.
He died.
Three days later he rose from the grave,
conquering death and bringing us new life.
So we shout out the good news:
**People: Christ has died,
Christ is risen,
Christ will come again.**

Leader: So, God, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us,
and on these gifts of bread and cup,
so that the bread we break
and the cup we bless
may be the communion
of Christ's body and blood.
Spirit, unite us with Christ,
and with everyone who shares this feast,
all across the world.
Send us out to be Christ's hands and feet
in our local communities and across the world.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

2.

God, we thank you.
You created everything our five senses experience.
You provide all that we need.
In our desert places, you bring us bread for every day.
In our thirsty times, you break open wells of new life.
But you don't just work in metaphors.
You give us real food, real water, real air.
You keep us alive.
Thank you.
When we turn from you, you do not abandon us.
You call us back to you and challenge us to be faithful for
others.
You turn us toward those in need
and remind us that we are all empty somehow.
You teach us how to live.
When we fall short, you forgive us.
Thank you.
You sent your Son Jesus
to live among us,
to comfort us,
to make us uncomfortable,
and to demonstrate a life of radical love.
He died on a cross for us and for our deliverance.
His body was broken; his blood was shed.
But this was not the end.
He rose from the grave;
he conquered death;
he brings new life.
Thank you.

We look forward to the day when we will feast with you,
with new bodies, in a new heaven and new earth,
without tears, without pain, without dying.
Until then, pour out your Holy Spirit on us.
Make us one with Christ.
Send us out to be your hands and feet,
locally and globally, in ways big and small,
with courage and hope.
We pray all this through Jesus Christ,
and in the power of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

3.

We are grateful, Lord.
We take part in this sacrament
not because we feel like we have to.
We want to receive communion because it is a time for us to
come to your table and say, "Thank you!"
Thank you for loving us;
thank you for creation;
thank you for the ways you provide!
We are grateful for your covenants,
for giving us the guiding words of the Old Testament,
and for speaking through the prophets.
We are grateful for your patience with us!
Even though your followers continued
to go their own way,
you sent your Son, Jesus Christ,
as a free gift of grace,
not only for them, but for all of us.
How can we thank you for all of these things, Lord?
One way is by receiving your body and blood
with gratitude.
Lord, we ask your Holy Spirit to be present here with us,
and for us all to know and believe in Christ's presence here.
May we, as your grateful people,
truly understand this meal as a way for us to be nourished,
united, and reminded of our role in the world,
as members of the body of Christ.
As we participate in this sacrament, we say, "Thank you,
Lord!"
Hallelujah! **Amen.**

Breaking the Bread

1.

The Lord Jesus, on the night of his arrest, took bread,
and after giving thanks to God,
he broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:

“Take, eat.

This is my body, given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me.”

In the same way he took the cup, saying:

“This cup is the new covenant sealed in my blood,
shed for you for the forgiveness of sins.

Whenever you drink it,
do this in remembrance of me.”

As Paul reminds us,
every time we eat this bread and drink this cup,
we proclaim the saving death of our risen Lord,
until he comes again.

Thanks be to God.

(*Adapted from the Book of Common Worship, ©1993.
Westminster John Knox Press. www.wjkbooks.com. Used
with permission.)

2.

Here we are at the Lord’s Table.
We see this bread and this cup,
and we need to be reminded of what Jesus did
on the night he was arrested.

That very night, he was with his closest friends, his disciples.

He took some bread, and he asked God to bless it.

Then he broke it, and said to them,

“This is my body broken for you.”

He instructed them to eat bread.

He then took the cup and poured wine into it.

He gave thanks to God, and then he said to them,

“This is my blood of the new covenant, shed for you,
and poured out for many.”

He instructed them to drink the wine.

Jesus taught this sacrament to the disciples that night
because he knew his followers would need

something physical
to practice as a remembrance of his sacrifice for us.

So we are here at the Lord’s Table,
and we take part in this sacrament,
proclaiming his death, resurrection, and ascension,
affirming we believe Jesus reigns,
and that he will come again!

Prayer after Communion

1.

Loving God,
you have satisfied us with good things.
Through the bread and cup, we have been filled.
Now, send us out—filled to the brim—
to be your people in the world, serving one another
in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

2.

Creator God,
you have made us new.
You have met our deepest needs.
You have filled us with your love.
You have brought us to this campus for a purpose.
May your Spirit give us courage
to love, to serve, and to hope,
in the name of Jesus. **Amen.**

3.

Lord, you have provided for us here.
You have nourished us.
We thank you, because we often don’t take the time
to truly let you provide for us!
Now that we have been fed,
we ask that your Holy Spirit will give us
the strength and energy
to go out of this place as your faithful disciples—
embracing the stranger,
reaching out to our friends,
loving those who are difficult to love,
and sharing the hope we find because of Jesus Christ,
who is our Savior and friend. **Amen.**

GERB: Bless

The Basics

This particular conversation with God in worship is drawing to an end. Having gathered in response to God's call, restored our relationship with God in confession and forgiveness, and encountered and responded to God in many ways, we now head back out into our daily lives. As we go, we are given both a gift and a purpose—a reminder to participate in what God is doing (Charge), that God is with us in all situations (Blessing), and a calling to participate.

The original spoken word moments and prayers offered here may be replaced by a song, a video, or a piece of art. More charges and benedictions can be found in the Occasional Services and in the online *UWorship* forum at ukirk.org.

Charge

1.

Leader: Jesus encounters us. He says,
“Do you love me? Feed my lambs.”
“Do you love me? Tend my sheep.”
“Do you love me?”

People: “Yes, Lord, you know everything. You know that we love you.”

Leader: Then go, tend the flock of God that has been given to you.

**People: Be humble before God,
so you might be lifted up.**

Leader: Cast all your anxiety on the Lord, and know that God cares for you.

**People: Lead your life with purpose.
Keep watch for what God is doing. Amen.**

(Year 1, Week 30, John 21:15–20)

(Year 4, Week 23, 1 Pet. 5:1–8)

2.

God says, “I will be with you.”
Waters won't overwhelm you.
Fire will not burn you.
Hear this promise: you will be okay!
So go now;
walk forward in faith, not fear.
Know and believe that you are called by name.
Show and share that redeeming love of our Savior
now and forevermore.

(Year 2, Week 16, Isa. 43:1–10)

3.

Praise God as you walk on campus;
consider God's call as you study, write,
work, sit in class, and do research.
Seek God's direction everywhere!
Know and believe Christ shines through you—
in who you are, and in all you do.
Go now in peace.

4.

Jesus said,
“Whoever does not carry the cross and follow me
cannot be my disciple.”
We are called to go out and be followers of Christ—
no matter the cost.
Consider what you need to give up or gain
in order to follow Jesus more closely.
Go from here, blessed to do the Lord's work,
boldly carry the cross of Christ, and faithfully follow him.
(Year 3, Week 19, Luke 14:25–35)

5.

As you leave this place,
remember to praise God.
And also remember:
Praise is not just acknowledging God's goodness
when things are going your way.
Praise is also crying out when you are struggling—
because praise is an act of trust.
Praise the Lord who watches over you now and forevermore.
Hallelujah! **Amen!**
(Year 4, Week 26, Ps. 146)

6.

We are called and commanded
to live a life that demonstrates
goodness, knowledge, self-control, perseverance,
godliness, compassion, and, above all, love.
What does that mean?
It means in our lecture halls, in our dining halls,
in our dorms, in our recreation centers,
in our comings and goings on campus,
we are to embody those aspects of our faith.
Go and answer the call. **Amen.**
(Year 4, Week 24, 2 Pet. 1)

7.

Respect those who work hard among you,
who care for you and guide you.

Live in peace with each other.

Support the weak and stumbling.

Build up those who have been torn down.

Be patient with everyone.

Make sure no one pays back wrong for wrong.

Instead, strive to do what is good for everyone.

Rejoice always. Pray continually.

Give thanks in every situation.

Don't brush off the Holy Spirit,

but examine everything carefully,
keeping the good and rejecting the bad.

May the God of peace make you whole and holy
in body, soul, and spirit.

Believe this: God is faithful.

(Year 4, Week 9, 1 Thess. 5:12–24)

8.

God has told us time and time again

what we are required to do as believers and followers:

Act justly, love mercifully, and walk humbly with our God.

In order to live this way, we have to shift our thinking—
to focus less on ourselves and more on others.

Pray for this to happen.

Hold each other accountable.

And actually do what God requires.

Then, wait and see how God will work through us
to impact the world.

Amen!

(Year 3, Week 8, Mic. 6:1–8)

9.

With the grace of God uplifting you,
with the life of Jesus Christ motivating you,
and with the power of the Holy Spirit equipping you,
go from this place,
willing and ready to give, to serve, and to love.

Amen.

10.

Now go:

walk out these doors

knowing that the God who became flesh and blood for *you*
rules the world in righteousness and does not reject you.

May the Holy Spirit lead you as you work in this
community,

As you develop relationships, and as you walk about this
campus.

Remember that you do not walk alone;

God's faithful love goes with you regardless of circumstance.

Blessing

1.

Go forth into the world to tell the good news of Jesus Christ
in all you do.

And may the power of the Holy Spirit
give you wisdom and courage

to do the work and service that is on your heart.

May the Word of Christ give you the words
to speak on his behalf,

and may the love of God bless you now and forever more.

Amen.

2.

God grants us grace and blesses us;

The Lord's face shines on us,

so that the ways of the Lord will become known on all the
earth,

and so salvation may become known among all the nations!

We get to be a part of that!

May the Lord continue to bless us
for the sake of all people here on earth! Amen!

(Year 2, Week 27, Ps. 67)

3.

Hear these words from the prophet Isaiah:

The Lord is everlasting and does not get worn out.

God sees those who are tired and weak and gives them
strength.

That strength is renewed through hope in the Lord.

Just like eagles that soar gracefully through the air,

So will God's people go, without getting exhausted.

Amen!

(Adapted from Isa. 40:28–31)

4.

Seize God's strength and power.
Pay attention to how Christ dwells among us.
Grasp onto the width, length, height,
and depth of Christ's love.

Let that love surpass your knowledge.
Let that love fill you to the brim.
Let that love unite you with all of God's people.

And remember, the Lord is able to do far, far more
than what we could ask or even imagine.
God is at work in you.

May Christ Jesus be at work in all of us forever. **Amen.**
(Adapted from Eph. 3:16–21)

5.

May our ears hear the cries of the unwanted,
may our eyes see the wounds of the sick,
may our hearts break for the brokenhearted,
may our minds remember the lost.
But above all,
may our lives be lived as a response
to God's gracious love for us.
Go now to live out your part in the body of Christ.

Amen.

6.

In the peaks and valleys,
in the wonderland and wilderness of college life,
go in the confidence of God's love and care for you;
go in the assurance of God's presence and permanence.

Receive now this blessing:

“God bless you and keep you,
God smile on you and gift you,
God look you full in the face and make you prosper.”

(Adapted from Num. 6:24–26, The Message)

7.

The Lord said to Abram, “Go.”
He was told to leave everything behind.
Everything that was familiar.
Everything that was comfortable.
And in return for his faithfulness,
the Lord promised Abram that he would be blessed.
He would be blessed to be a blessing to others.

The Lord sends us out, too.
The Lord says, “Go.”
Leave things behind,
and take with you this blessing.
You are blessed to be a blessing to others.

8.

We are blessed by God who knows us by name.
We are blessed by God whose giving knows no bounds.
We are blessed by God whose grace extends
to every part of our lives:
on campus;
in our residence halls;
in front of our computer screens;
in our classrooms;
when we take our exams;
when we write our papers;
during those days when we can't finish everything
on the to-do list;
during those nights when sleep eludes us.
We are blessed by God whose love never flees
or runs out on us.
We are blessed by God who never leaves us alone.
So go out into the world confident in God,
full of grace and hope and love.
Go out—blessed.

CREATIVE ARTS RESOURCES

GERB LITURGIES

Listed below are possible alternative, creative, liturgical resources: songs, video clips, and other resources to use in addition to or in lieu of traditional liturgy already suggested throughout each of the GERB sections.

Key:

GTG=*Glory to God*

STF=*Sing the Faith*

PH=*Presbyterian Hymnal*

Gather

Call to Worship

1. “Come All You People (Uyai mose),” GTG #388, STF #2274
2. “Come, Let Us Worship God” (Call and Response), Ray Makeever
3. Video: *Invitation to the Thirsty* (Visual Liturgy) theworkofthepeople.com/invitation-to-the-thirsty
4. “All Glory Forever,” Justin Amundrud, Dwight Pendleton, Tyler Prange, Stephen Rodriguez, performed by Waken, noisetrade.com/waken/eternity-light
5. “Made to Worship,” Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash, Stephan Conley Sharp, CCLI Song #4794118
6. “Gather Us In,” Iona Community in *Sing! A New Creation* #8, GTG #401, STF #2236
7. “Come, Holy Spirit,” Iona Community, *Sing! A New Creation*, #165
8. “I Lift My Eyes Up,” Brian Doerksen, *Sing! A New Creation*, #208

Call to Confession

1. “Just as I Am,” GTG #424

Prayer of Confession

1. “I Shall Not Want,” Audrey Assad and Bryan Brown, CCLI #7004369
2. “Lord I Need You,” Christy Nockels, Daniel Carson, Jesse Reeves, Kristian Stanfill, Matt Maher, CCLI #5925687
3. “Have Mercy on Me,” JJ Heller, *The Pretty and the Plain*
4. Video: *A Clean Heart* (Visual Liturgy) theworkofthepeople.com/a-clean-heart (*Year 2, Week 14, Ps. 51*)
5. “What if We Were Real,” Ben Glover, Cindy Morgan, Mandisa Hundley, CCLI #5767632

6. “The Jesus Prayer”—*The Jesus Prayer is a short prayer used mainly within the Orthodox traditions. This prayer originated with the Desert Fathers and was prayed or spoken aloud repeatedly.*

As a response to the Scripture, students are invited to stay where they are, or to move to another area of the worship space alone. They can get on their knees, stand, sit, lay down, or whatever is most comfortable.

Repeat silently or aloud the Jesus Prayer:

“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God,
have mercy on me, a sinner.”

Continue repeating this prayer with every breath for three to five minutes.

(Year 2, Week 1, Neh. 1)

(Year 2, Week 14, Ps. 51:1–17)

Assurance of Forgiveness

1. “As Sure As the Sun,” Ellie Holcomb and Rusty Varenkamp
2. “Jesus Lord of Heaven,” Phil Wickham, CCLI #4176073
3. “The Best in Me,” Aaron Lindsey, Marvin L. Sapp, CCLI #6153362

Encounter

Scripture

1. Video: *Theatre: Seen* (Rehab)
vimeo.com/8433949
(Year 1, Week 13, Josh. 2)
2. Video: *Treetop Honey Gathering* (Documentary Clip)
bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00dlv4
(Year 1, Week 15, Deut. 31:1–8)
3. Video: *Little Girl and Ps. 23* (Scripture Reading)
godtube.com/watch/?v=GGL7NNNX
(Year 1, Week 18, Ps. 23)
4. Video: *Ps. 42* (Visual Liturgy)
sermonspice.com/product/50053/psalm-42
(Year 2, Week 7, Ps. 42)
5. Video: *Ps. 138* (Visual Liturgy)
worshiphousemedia.com/mini-movies/43964/psalm-138
(Year 4, Week 21, Ps. 138)
6. Video: *A Thousand Questions* (Spoken Word)
youtube.com/watch?v=YiNBmNI88Pk
(Year 2, Week 14, Isa. 6:1–18)
7. Video: *Deon* (Documentary)
deidox.com/film/deon/
(Year 3, Weeks 23 or 24, Rom. 12)
(Year 4, Week 30, Matt. 28:16–20)
8. Video: *Jesus Said These Things* (Visual Liturgy)
theworkofthepeople.com/jesus-said-these-things
(Year 1, Week 22, John 17:1–11)
9. Video: *Alyssa* (Documentary)
deidox.com/film/alyssa/
(Year 1, Week 12 or 13, John 9)
(Year 2, Week 4, Week 18, Heb. 11 or 12)
10. Lectio Divina (Interactive/Reflective Scripture Reading)
Lectio divina (*Latin for “divine reading”*) is an ancient Christian spiritual practice of listening to God as we are reading Scripture. This practice helps us to engage God’s Word in a different way. Instead of reading Scripture, we, in a sense, let Scripture read us. In this exercise, we are asked to pay attention to the “still small voice of God” through the Holy Spirit as we are reading and hearing God’s Word.

There are three parts to the contemplative practice of lectio divina. The first part is lectio, or reading of the Scripture. You will need three readers (preferably with at least one male and one female reader). The reading is to be done slowly and thoughtfully, and most likely, the participants will hear different things from each of the readers. The second part is meditatio, where the participants meditate on what was read. Through meditation, we can allow God’s word to become our word and see what affects us the most about a certain passage. Finally, there is oratio, or prayer. This prayer is to be a conversation with God about how these words of Scripture can change, encourage, or heal us.

For use during a service:

1. Ask three people to be readers of the same passage.
2. Ask the rest of the participants to be hearers, listening to God’s voice by taking note of a word or phrase that particularly stands out to them during the reading.
3. Explain that there will be silence after each reading, and during the silent time, they are to repeat in their minds the word or phrase that impacted them the most.
4. Have the first volunteer read the passage slowly and deliberately, taking their time to read it aloud as they feel so led.
5. Allow for a time of silence—approximately one minute.
6. After the silence, have the participants share about that word or phrase and why they believe it stood out. (Preferably they would share in small groups of no more than three people.)

Note: You can “modify” the focus of the readings each time they are read if you prefer. For example, when reading 1 Corinthians 13:4–8, the first time have participants listen for a word or phrase that stands out; the second time have everyone consider a word or phrase that touches their heart in a particular way; during the third reading, ask the reader to replace the word “love” with “God,” and see how that impacts people’s responses.

Respond

Affirmation of Faith

1. "At the Name," Shea Cole, noisetrade.com/houseofstmichaelthearchangel/house-of-st-michael-the-archangel-hymns
(Year 4, Week 5, Phil. 2)
2. "I Believe," JJ Heller, *Loved*, Live Acoustic Performance: youtube.com/watch?v=GhGI3KWRuSs
3. "Love Displayed," Justin Kintzel, Ross King, noisetrade.com/justinkintzel/love-displayed-single
4. "Help My Unbelief," Audrey Assad, *Fortunate Fall*
5. "With Us," Chris and Bethany Solyntjes, *Still*, chrisandbethanymusic.com/
6. "Creed," Rich Mullins

Prayers of the People

1. "Hands of the Healer," Brandon Heath, Thad Cockrel, CCLI #6396112

Offering

1. "Spirit Speaks," All Sons and Daughters, David Leonard, Drew Cline, Leslie Jordan, CCLI #5806627
Video: YouTube of Live Performance, youtube.com/watch?v=-qoWjtnVBPI
2. "Doxology," Ghost Ship, *Citizens* noisetrade.com/ghostshipmusic/ghost-ship-citizens-sampler

Bless

1. "God, Be the Love to Search and Keep Me (O Christ, Surround Me)" GTG #543
2. "Siyahamba / We Are Marching in the Light of God," GTG #853, STF #2235
3. "May the Lord, Mighty God," PH #596, *Sing! A New Creation* #285
4. "Benediction," Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman, CCLI #7000703
5. "Go, My Children, with My Blessing," GTG #547
6. "Send Me Out," Steve Fee, CCLI #5621778

Charge

1. "Kae Le Kae (Anywhere)," Soweto Gospel Choir
2. "May the God of Hope Go with Us," GTG #765, PH #432

Blessing

1. Sing together the chorus of:
"Give Me Your Eyes," Brandon Heath, Jason Ingram, CCLI #5359222
2. "May the Lord Bless and Keep You," Jon Illg, CCLI #1339607
3. "May the Love of the Lord," GTG #549
4. "St. Teresa's Prayer," John Michael Talbot, CCLI #62229

OCCASIONAL SERVICES:
LITURGICAL AND ACADEMIC CALENDAR

FIRST WEEK (OPTION 1)

For some students, this will be their first week away from home. They will feel the anxiety of leaving home for the first time and the excitement of something new. For others, it will be the first week of their return to school. This service is designed to give a sense of place in the midst of change.

Playlist

“Come, Now Is the Time to Worship,” Brian Doerksen,
CCLI #2430948

“How Great Is Our God,” Chris Tomlin, Ed Cash,
Jesse Reeves, CCLI #4348399

“You Are Holy,” Marc Imboden, Tammi Rhoton,
CCLI #2332149

“The House of God Forever,” Jon Foreman,
CCLI #5295702

“10,000 Reasons,” Jonas Myrin, Matt Redman,
CCLI #6016351

“The Kingdom,” Bethany Dillon, *So Far: The Acoustic
Sessions*

“Not with Haste,” Mumford and Sons, *Babel*

“Where We Belong,” Josh Blakesley, *Free*

“No One Like You,” David Crowder, Jack Parker, Jason
Solley, Jeremy Bush, Mike Dodson, Mike Hogan,
CCLI #4276894

Gather

Call to Worship

(Psalm 84:2–4) (*Year 3, Week 11*)

Leader: I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts
of the Lord.

**People: With my whole being, body and soul, I will
shout joyfully to the living God.**

Leader: Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow
builds her nest and raises her young at a place near
your altar, O Lord of Hosts, my ruler and my God!

**People: What joy for those who can live in your house,
always singing your praises.**

Opening Prayer

Giver of hope and new beginnings, we give you thanks for
gathering us here today. We come to worship bringing our
excitement, our worries, our fears, and our joys. Loving
God, help us remember that we’ve come to sing your praises

and not our own. May we find our way and our place as we
settle into life at school and away from home. Remind us
that we are never alone. In Christ’s name, we pray. Amen.

Song of Praise

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness

Encounter

Considerations: This is intended to be two Scripture readings
and two short meditations followed by silence, but you may
also choose to use just one passage and meditation.

Prayer of Illumination

Scripture

Genesis 12:1–9 (*Year 1, Week 2*)

Reflection

Considerations: Reflect upon the following points. Or create
questions from the points to form a call-and-response-style
sermon. Additionally, you might consider having a student
use the points as a springboard to his/her own reflection.

- Just as Abram was called from the land of his parents,
students are being called forth to establish themselves in
the new space of college. This applies for those moving
far away, those moving down the road, and commuters
who are forming a new community as well.
- Abram was called from his homeland. Calling wasn’t
just something that happened thousands of years ago.
College is a time that God can use to mold and shape
students, using them now in spreading the good news
and preparing them for where they will be led following
graduation. How might students be attentive to God in
the bustle of college life to be ready to heed God’s call?
- Abram builds an altar in his new home place (and then
in the next one too). How might students be intentional
about claiming a place for God in their college homeland?
What might that look like physically and spiritually?

Silent Reflection

Song

Scripture

John 15:5–17 (*Year 1, Week 20*)

Reflection

Considerations: For the meditation, you may want to consider reflecting on the following points. Or create questions from the points to form a call-and-response-style sermon. Additionally, you might consider acting out this story from John first and then having a student(s) use the points as a springboard to his/her own reflection.

- What does it mean for a student's daily life that Jesus is the true vine and they are the branches? What does it look like to remain in God and God's Word as a college student—away from home and from their parents' faith (or lack thereof)?
- What does one make of Jesus saying, "If you remain in me and I in you, then you will produce much fruit. Without me, you can't do anything" (v. 5b)? How is this conditional statement applicable for a student experiencing a new beginning/new choices? Are Jesus' words comforting or threatening? Why?
- How do college students remain in God's love and also love one another? What are some ways to show God's love and to have God's joy be made complete in you?
- How can students explore things on campus and yet still remain attached to Christ, the true vine?
- What do you make of Jesus' statement "You didn't choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you could go and produce fruit and so that your fruit could last" (v. 16)? How does one produce kingdom fruit that lasts on a college campus?

Silent Reflection

Considerations: Offer a prompt for silent reflection which leads into the offering. The first week of the school year is a New Year's Eve of sorts, a prime opportunity for a new start and a recommitment.

- How might students be attentive to God's calling this new school year?
- How might college be a time of preparation for living into God's dreams for us and for the world?
- How might students carve out sacred space for encounters with God amidst the busyness of college?

Song

Respond

Affirmation of Faith

(from A Brief Statement of Faith)

In life and in death we belong to God.
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.

Prayers of the People

Offering

Considerations: Provide students with a marker of your college/university. Maybe your school has a lake or pond where you can gather stones. Maybe you can get clippings from the hedges which surround the football stadium. Note cards with the college logo will work as well.

Have students write on the object (or on a ribbon or piece of paper attached to the object) how they will offer themselves in a new way to God this school year. They can present the object, paper, ribbon, and so forth by bringing it forward during the offering. Or they may take a portion of it home to remind themselves of their commitment.

Communion

Invitation to the Table

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

Considerations: This is a good opportunity to tie into the language from the John reading by giving thanks for the fruit of the vine, which will be part of the sacrament in the sharing of the cup. May the taste of the fruits of God's provision and presence strengthen students for bearing fruit in this coming year.

Words of Institution

Prayer after Communion

Bless

Closing Prayer

God of all places, we gather at a new beginning. Some of us have been here before, but we come today with new challenges, new hopes, new possibilities. Some of us are creating a whole new home for ourselves, looking at a blank slate ready to be filled with new friendships, crisp clean textbooks, and bedrooms freshly decorated. We ask your blessing on the year before us. May we find home in this place. May we be attentive to the ways you call us to embrace you above all that comes with being a college student. Help us to set aside time to remember who we are in light of who we know you to be. Mold us that we may not just grow smarter but may grow in ways that prepare us to heed your claim on our lives. In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

Song

Charge

As we leave this place of worship to go out and face our new beginnings this school year, may we remember that we are never alone. God is always with us. Our Prince of Peace will never forsake us. May we live in hope that we are connected to God and God to us: living our lives to bear the fullest, lushest fruit. May we never forget how many of us have experienced loneliness, fear, and new adventures. And may we share God's love as we reach out to others, especially when it is difficult and we feel as if we have no time.

Benediction

And now may the love of God, the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the friendship and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all forevermore—world without end. Amen.

FIRST WEEK (OPTION 2)

The start of the school year provides an opportunity for the reshaping of the campus ministry community. Freshmen and transfer students may join your group, and returning students may test the waters of your worshiping community for the first time. Whether students are returning or joining in worship with your group for the first time, the beginning of the year is an opportunity to remember that we are called to worship and serve God in the community where God plants us. This service creates a framework for committing to faithful stewardship of life in the college community.

Playlist

“Gather Us In,” George Matheson, Lani Smith
“Everything Glorious,” David Crowder, CCLI #4674173
“Everlasting God,” Brenton Brown, Ken Riley, CCLI #4556538
“Nothing Can Ever Come Between Us,” Taizé Community
“Yearn,” Shane Barnard, CCLI #4325556
“Your Love Is Strong,” Jon Foreman, *Limbs and Branches*
“Living Water,” Chris and Bethany Solyntjes, *Still*
“Dig a Little Deeper,” Mahalia Jackson, *In My Home over There*

Gather

Greeting and Gathering

Considerations: To fill the awkwardness of initial gathering with new and returning students, create an intentional mingling opportunity. Get-To-Know-You Bingo is a great activity for the beginning of the semester. Give each student a bingo card with spaces filled with descriptors such as “freshman,” “from another state,” or “living off campus.” The students have to find someone to sign their name in the space that matches a descriptor. They can only use each person once. Have two or three prizes ready for the first few students who get bingo.

Opening Prayer

Leader: God of glory, we thank you for this time together.

People: You are the One we come to worship.

Leader: Lord Jesus, we praise you for this community.

People: You are the One we want to reflect.

Leader: Holy Spirit, we offer you our hearts.

People: You are the One we seek to guide us.

Leader: We come together to praise, give thanks and offer all we have.

People: Amen.

Song of Praise

Call to Confession

Today, community is forming anew, as familiar faces join alongside new friends. God is calling us together, but we come bearing our own shortcomings and the failings of the communities where we have spent the summer. Even in this campus community, filled with possibility, we are not always attuned to God’s hopes for us. So we pause to lay our apologies at God’s feet, trusting that in this moment of fresh starts, God is already making us new. Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

Loving God, you have placed us in communities and called us to love you and our neighbors. But sometimes that is difficult. Sometimes our neighbor annoys us or belittles us. Sometimes we offer less care for others than we would hope for ourselves. Sometimes our neighbors tempt us with shortcuts and easy pleasures. Sometimes we do the tempting. At this fresh start of the year, O God, we pray for the strength to seek you amidst all the racket that vies for our attention. We pray to speak of you when it would be easier to remain silent. And we pray for the courage to remain true to ourselves, your unique, handcrafted children, in whom you place great care and hope. In the name of Christ, we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

from Revelation 21:1–6 (*Year 4, Week 30*)

God said, “I am making everything new. Write this down, because my words are trustworthy and true.” Even now, God is creating a new heaven and new earth. God is making a home here, among God’s people—to live here, to call us God’s own. Each of us, individually and collectively, is washed clean, in God’s gushing spring of living water, shined up for a new start, and set free to live for God and God’s children here and everywhere.

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Dear God, we are a community, a campus, gathered to learn. May this moment be set aside to learn about you and your hopes for us. Speak to us the dreams and lessons you have for us this day. Amen.

Scripture

Jeremiah 29:4–13 (*Year 2, Week 21*)

Romans 12:9–16 (*Year 3, Week 25*)

Considerations: Each Scripture passage provides a glimpse of what it looks like to live faithfully in community. Jeremiah speaks to a community in exile, making a new home in a strange land, where God still calls God's people to intentional living and fidelity. Romans offers an instructional list of ways that Christians are called to live in a world of temptations, challenge, need, and celebration.

You might provide an opportunity for a student or two to reflect briefly after each passage, or ask students to share with one another what they heard in each passage that is relevant to their college life and life in their particular community.

Reflection

Considerations: Pass out a sheet of paper for the students and have them write down their answers to the following questions. At the end of the service, have students leave their paper with you, explaining that you will return them at the end of the semester, so they can see what they wrote this first night.

- What do you think are God's plans for you this semester?
- How would you like to grow closer to Christ this semester?
- What do you think will be your biggest challenges in the coming weeks/months?
- How can we be praying for you this semester?

Play a few songs during this reflection time. See playlist for suggestions.

Song

Respond

Affirmation of Faith

from *Study Catechism: Confirmation Version*,

Questions 1–4

Leader: What is God's purpose for your life?

People: God wills that I should live by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the love of God, and in the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Leader: How do you live by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ?

People: I am not my own. I have been bought with a price. The Lord Jesus Christ loved me and gave himself for me. I entrust myself completely to his care, giving thanks each day for his wonderful goodness.

Leader: How do you live for the love of God?

People: I love because God first loved me. Amazed by grace, I live for the Lord who died and rose again, triumphant over death, for my sake. Therefore, I take those around me to heart, especially those in need, knowing that Christ died for them no less than for me.

Leader: How do you live in the communion of the Holy Spirit?

People: By the Holy Spirit, I am made one with the Lord Jesus Christ. I am baptized into Christ's body, the church. As a member of this community, I trust in God's Word, share in the Lord's Supper, and turn to God in prayer. As I grow in grace and knowledge, I am led to do the good works that God intends for my life.

Joys and Concerns

Considerations: As students may be timid in sharing prayer requests with the whole group during the first week, ask them to find a partner (which also provides an opportunity for getting to know someone new). Have pairs share with one another a joy as well as a concern that they have about the coming semester, leaving home, the world, and so forth. Explain that you will provide a moment of silence during the prayer for partners to pray in gratitude and supplication for one another.

Prayers of the People

Creator God, thank you for calling us together to this place for the first budding flowers of new community. As we prepare for all the new things you have in store for us this year—for the start of a brand new adventure for some of us and the winding down of our time here, in preparation for the next step of the journey—we turn to you in gratitude and in hope.

Please look out for all the incoming students who are just learning their way. Place in their path people ready to answer questions, solve problems, and point in the right direction. Settle any nerves and make this new community feel like home.

Lord in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

For all who are leaving behind exciting summer adventures, for all who are leaving behind tough times, and for those who brought their challenges and concerns with them, we pray for your sense of peace, comfort, and shared journey.

Lord in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

As our calendars fill with homework assignments, tests, social obligations, and service opportunities, give us the clarity to recognize what is life-giving. Remind us that our worth is not measured in the grade, the invitation, or making the team, but in the care with which you created us and filled us with your hope.

Lord in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray for communities around the world which are also starting anew—for girls being allowed to go to school for the first time, for towns with a newly dug well, for all signs of your kingdom breaking into the world—we give you thanks and ask for energy, resources, and a chance to live into their potential. For communities around the world which are aching for a fresh start—for a ceasefire, for rain, for the smell of bread, for economic resurgence, for your intervention in hearts, in nature, in social structures to bring about your peace.

Lord in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

And in the silence of our hearts, we raise up to you the prayers of this community, with the offering of our prayer requests for our partners.

(silence)

Lord in your mercy,

hear our prayer.

We pray all of this in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray, “Our Father . . .” (*continue with the Lord’s Prayer*).

Offering

Considerations: The start of a new academic year is a prime opportunity to dedicate or rededicate your group to service with a community care provider. Ministry leadership might offer a minute for mission about the organization you will work with, service opportunities, and so forth. Then for the offering, students may write their names and ways they will challenge themselves to serve this year. (Be sure to follow up.) Or have students provide names of organizations or types of volunteer work they would like to engage in as a ministry. If they are willing to help coordinate or research, have them include their names. Following the service, ministry leadership can narrow down to a core commitment and report back at a future meeting or worship service.

Bless

Song

Charge

from 1 Peter 2:10

Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people. As God’s people in this place, go into your dorms, your apartments, wherever you call home; go into your classes, your clubs, wherever you may gather; go into coffee shops, restaurants, places in the community where this campus is planted and embrace your calling to be God’s faithful children. Go forth to love, to worship, to comfort, to serve, to grow, to proclaim, trusting always that God goes with you, before you, alongside you, and within you.

Benediction

May God’s love surround you, may Christ’s peace become you, and may the wide fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest in and motivate each one of you as we leave this place to do God’s grace-filled work on this campus and in the world.

Following the Service

Considerations: This is a good opportunity for students to mingle and get to know one another. To encourage students to stick around following the service, consider coordinating a playlist of upbeat music to extend the gathering time beyond the confines of the worship service. Consider having a welcome reception following the service with food, a few essentials, and ministry information.

FINDING OUR PLACE

At the beginning of a school year, there's no shortage of things happening in students' lives: fraternity and sorority rush, new classes, switching majors, living in a dorm for the first time, and on and on. For many students, especially freshmen, this experience can be overwhelming. Bearing that in mind, the following service is meant to be held in the midst of the chaos at the beginning of another academic year. A few things to consider as you plan:

1. Since it's the beginning of the school year, it's important for all present to wear name tags. On the name tags, ask students to indicate their year and hometown. You could also ask them to write something that sparks conversation (e.g., best movie they saw that summer, favorite flavor of ice cream, most embarrassing moments).
2. Be sure to ask any returning students to be present and welcoming at all entrances to the worship space. This can be an especially important role for your student leaders.
3. If you ever ask students to lead worship, this service is an appropriate time to do so. Leadership in worship communicates (especially to newcomers) that student participation plays a critical role in the life of the ministry.
4. Have a slideshow playing of the ministry's activities from the previous school year as people gather for worship.

Playlist

- "Amazing Grace," GTG #649, PH #280
"Be Thou My Vision," GTG #450, PH #339
"You Never Let Go," Matt Redman, Beth Redman, CCLI #4674166
"Song of Hope," Chase Jenkins, Dan Hamilton, Robbie Seay, Ryan Owens, Taylor Johnson, Tedd Tjornhom, CCLI #5111477
"Great Is Thy Faithfulness," Thomas Obediah Chisholm, William Marim Runyans, CCLI #18723, version by Chris Rice
"How He Loves," John Mark McMillan, CCLI #5032549
"New Wonders," Sandra McCracken, CCLI #5759970 version by New Old Hymns, *Hymns Sampler*
"Home in Me," Ginny Owens, *Say Amen*
"Hello My Name Is," Matthew West, CCLI #6439969

Gather

Gathering Reflections

Considerations: Prior to the Call to Worship, ask students what they bring with them to worship. What joys are present in their lives? What baggage do they carry? What are they excited about as they begin a new year? What has them afraid entering the school year? (Hint: You may consider having students share with a partner first to ease them into sharing.)

Call To Worship

From Psalm 139 (*Year 4, Week 22*)

Leader: God, you have searched us and known us.

People: You know when we sit down. You know when we rise up.

Leader: You discern our thoughts from far away.

People: Where can we go from your spirit? Where can we flee from you?

Leader: Wherever we go, you are there—in the highest heaven, in the deepest of places, everywhere in between.

People: You are with us. We are never alone.

Opening Prayer

Ever-present God, wherever we go, you are the great I Am. You are with us when we are surrounded by professors and students in crowded lecture halls. You are with us when we toss and turn late at night in our dorm rooms. And now, as we begin a new school year, with many uncertainties, adventures, highs, and lows ahead, you walk before us, reassure us, comfort, and guide us. Make your presence known to us this day as we lift up our songs, give voice to our deepest joys and fears, soak in your Word, and faithfully respond by sharing your Word on the campus, in the community, and in the world for all to see and hear. For, wherever we go, on the brightest of days and darkest of nights, we long to follow you and to feel your presence. Amen.

Song of Praise

Call to Confession

It doesn't matter who we are or where we come from, one thing is for certain: we all mess up. We all sin. But, even though we don't deserve it, God's love knows no bounds. When we confess our sins, God forgives us. So, let us now name silently and aloud the ways we have fallen short.

Prayer of Confession

Let us prepare for our corporate confession by settling into a silent confession, each of us one-on-one with God. (*Allow 30 seconds of silence here.*) Let us pray together.

Merciful God,
You call to each of us by name. You know us better than we know ourselves, for we are fearfully and wonderfully made. You love us, not because of what we have done, but often in spite of what we have done. Still, when we hear you call, we do not answer. We ignore you or we run away and cower in shadows. We don't always view your presence among us as a blessing, but rather as a burden that we wish away out of fear or shame. Though you know us and love us completely, we often see ourselves as unknowable, unlovable, and utterly incomplete. Lord, in the midst of all of our mess, redeem us. Forgive us. Cleanse us. Help us to start fresh that we might follow Jesus with our whole selves and, like Christ, love you, our neighbors, and ourselves with everything we have. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Passing the Peace

Leader: The peace of Christ is not an easy peace, but a peace that comes through deep truth. The peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Considerations: This moment is especially important for a service at the beginning of the school year, as returning and incoming students start to worship together. The more opportunities for the students to call one another by name (name tags are great to have here), the better. Leave plenty of time and space for the peace to be passed. Encourage people to cross the room to greet someone new, and, even if they know one another, to practice hospitality by always saying each other's names, if possible.

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Send your Spirit, O Lord, as we listen to your Word, that we might understand where our true place is: with you. Amen.

Scripture

Deuteronomy 31:1–8 (*Year 1, Week 12*)

John 4:1–30 (*Year 1, Week 5*)

Reflection

Considerations: You may read both Scripture readings followed by an individual reflection on each reading. Or you may read both Scripture passages and offer a single reflection.

Deuteronomy 31:1–8—In this text, Moses encourages Joshua, who finds himself as Moses' successor with the responsibility of leading God's people to the Promised Land, without Moses. The urging to be strong and bold and the promises that God will go before and with Joshua and the Israelites parallels the students' journey, going off on their own to the "Promised Land" of college (freedom at last!). Despite its billing as the land of milk and honey, the Promised Land was not always very promising for God's people: war, violence, and idolatry represented a few stumbling blocks for them. College also isn't always the land of milk and honey for students: exams, papers, peer pressure, and labs piled on top of frantic social lives (or not), stressful relationships, agonizing addiction, mental illness, and the weight of discerning a course in life. Joshua was at a crossroads in his life, with nothing but a land of opportunity and questions before him. This brings plenty of possibilities for a campus minister. For those students who are finding their place, how might they relate to Joshua? What questions might Joshua have been asking? What questions are students asking? And what does it mean that the Lord goes "before" us?

John 4:1–30—In this text we find a Samaritan woman coming to the well at noon, the hottest time of the day when it is deserted. Add to this that Samaritans were considered beneath Jews, and we get the picture that this woman is not fully a part of the community or recognized as fully human. Yet Jesus met her where she was, taking the risk to ask her for water. It was a risk for both of them, as Jewish men did not initiate conversation with women in public—not even with their own wives. This Samaritan woman discovers that even in her shame, she can accept Christ's love for herself. Even in intentionally seeking solitude, she unknowingly thirsts for Christ's living water. She thirsts to find her home in a loving and grace-filled God, who knows her story and loves her in spite of it. Her encounter leads her to go forth, inviting others to come and partake in this living water.

Whether we already feel connected, are searching for where we fit, or feel like outcasts, this story reminds us that even when we are most unsure of our place, Christ seeks us out, even right here in college. The woman at the well began a life of proclamation after her encounter with Jesus; when we find our place on campus, what does that look like for our relationship with God? What if we feel like finding our place and growing in God don't coincide? What are some examples of life-giving opportunities, living water, on campus? How can we seek them out and use them to root us in our commitment to faithfulness even as we are learning who God is calling us to be?

Song of Reflection

Respond

Affirmation of Faith

Option 1

from Romans 8:31–39 (*Year 3, Week 23*)

Leader: What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not withhold his own Son, but gave him up for all of us, will he not also give us everything else? Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn? It is Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us. Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

People: No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Option 2

from Isaiah 43:1–3 (*Year 2, Week 16*)

But now thus says the Lord,
he who created you, O Jacob,
he who formed you, O Israel:
Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have called you by name, you are mine.
When you pass through the waters, I will be with you;
and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you;
When you walk through fire you shall not be burned,
and the flame shall not consume you.
For I am the Lord your God,
the Holy One of Israel, your Savior.

Prayers of the People

Offering

Considerations: Set aside a portion of your budget and allow students to determine where it will be donated. Ask, "What life-giving place should we gift our offering to this week/month?" Or encourage students to make a commitment to check out a volunteer opportunity this week of a life-giving organization to which they could give their time. Have them write their commitment on a card and turn it in. Pray for these organizations and allow time next week to hear about the visits.

Communion

Considerations: Often as students are trying to find their place at school, they are waiting for an invitation. They need to pass someone else's inspection, to measure up, to fit a criterion. But at this table, all are welcome. Jesus is the host who invites people from east, west, north, and south. This is a table of inclusion. They are wanted here.

Bless

Song of Sending

Closing Prayer

Lord, continue to gather us in under your wings. Call us by name. Send people to surround us and to remind us who and whose we are. Grant us your love and your amazing grace that we may find our place here. May we look for Christ in those we encounter along the way, and may we have hope that you're always with us—no matter what we've done or where we are. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

Charge

from Deuteronomy 31:7–8 (*Year 1, Week 12*)

Be strong and bold, for you are the one who will go with this people into the land that the LORD has sworn to their ancestors to give them; and you will put them in possession of it. It is the LORD who goes before you. God will be with you; God will not fail you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed.

Benediction

from Numbers 6:24–26 (*Year 1, Week 9*)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace. Amen.

FAMILY WEEKEND

This service recognizes (through readings, liturgy, and music) that many college students wrestle with questions of faith and family. It seeks to be honest that at one point or another, part of the human condition is to feel “orphaned” and/or homesick.

This service also acknowledges that families can be a source of great joy and deep pain. Indeed, weekends are a prime time for pastoral care. Old patterns of relating and sensitive issues of divorce, even death, often rise to the surface.

While some students celebrate their visiting family members, just as many find themselves grieving or struggling with complicated feelings toward familial relationships.

This service invites worshipers to both lament the broken state of their families and celebrate their place in the household of God.

Playlist

“Blest Be the Tie That Binds,” GTG #306, PH #438

“One Family in the Lord,” The Church in Cleveland

“Orphan Girl,” Gillian Welch, *Revival*

“Sometimes I Feel Like a Motherless Child,” Robert J. Powell, CCLI #5066931, version by Sweet Honey in the Rock

“Family,” TobyMac, *Eye on It*

“Family,” Dolly Parton, *Eagle When She Flies*

“The Family of God,” Gloria Gaither, William J. Gaither

“We Are Family,” Sister Sledge, *Disco Gold*

“Lives Are Changing,” Rick Muchow, CCLI #2435936

“Where We Belong,” Joel Davies, Reuben Morgan, CCLI #5065932

Gather

Call to Worship

Leader: Loving God, thank you for calling us your own.

People: We are your children, Lord, and we belong to you!

Leader: Faithful God, thank you for loving us just as we are.

People: We are your children, Lord, and we belong to you!

Leader: God of every generation, thank you for inviting us into your family.

People: We are your children, Lord, and we belong to you! Amen!

Song of Praise

Prayer of Confession

God of every generation,

We long to connect, but choose isolation.

We desire community, but hide from one another.

We seek to belong, but exclude others.

God of hope, forgive us.

Mend our broken relationships, heal our families,

and send us out as agents of reconciliation,

that we may invite others into the household of God.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Children of God, hear this good news:

Though once lost, now we are found.

Though once broken, now we are healed.

Though once enslaved, now we are free.

Though once scattered, now we are gathered.

Though once orphaned, now we are adopted.

Because of Jesus Christ, we are redeemed, reconciled, and restored.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, hear and believe the good news of the gospel,

In Jesus Christ we are forgiven! Thanks be to God!

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Galatians 4:4–7

Mark 3:31–35

Romans 9:26

Song

Reflection

Considerations: There are times when we don't feel like we belong, even if we come from the best of families. There are times when we do feel we belong and need to reach out to others who are estranged. This moment of reflection is the time to share the good news that we all belong in the family of God. We belong to God and to one another, as we find kinship in and through the reconciling act of Jesus Christ in the world.

Respond

Affirmation of Faith

(excerpts from A Brief Statement of Faith)

In life and in death we belong to God.
Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit,
we trust in the one triune God, the Holy One of Israel,
whom alone we worship and serve.

We trust in God,
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.

In everlasting love,
the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant people
to bless all families of the earth.
Hearing their cry,
God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.
Loving us still,
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
God is faithful still.

Prayers of the People

God of all generations, as we gather today to worship you, help us to be mindful that not everyone feels like they belong. Many of us have experienced being an outsider and being hurt by harmful words or actions. We pray for those who feel isolated, lonely, or excluded from community. May we, as a community of faith, be welcoming to all of God's children, even those we disagree with or may not like.

We pray for our enemies. We pray for those who persecute us or those whom we persecute. Guide and direct our words and actions so that we might better serve you and one another in this world.

We pray for those without a community of faith. God, as you delivered the children of Israel, may you deliver and claim those for whom bondage and addiction are real. May we all find freedom in the knowledge and experience of your love and grace.

And we pray for those whose families are gathered, as well as for those who have no family or who are estranged from their family. Unite us all, as heirs of Christ and like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child, or like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal son. Remind us of your faithfulness and unconditional claim on each of us. Amen.

Song

Offering

Considerations: Turn to a neighbor and share a time when you felt excluded, isolated, homesick, or left out. Share what it means to know that you belong to God. After sharing and hearing personal stories of exclusion and belonging, take those experiences out into the world and bear witness to God's promise that we are all valued and beloved members of God's family. We share our witness and vulnerability as an offering to the glory of God. It would be appropriate to offer a prayer of dedication of commitment to these tasks.

Communion

Invitation

adapted from Ephesians 1:4–6

Brothers and sisters in Christ, before the world was a twinkle in God's eye, God, through Christ, chose us. God chose us to be God's people, God's own family! Before the stars were flicked from God's fingertips into a black canvas heaven, our Creator chose to adopt us into God's own family. What joy God took in this planning, that through Jesus, God's beloved, we might shout praises to

our Father, our Mother in heaven, and we might call one another brother and sister!

And so God calls us in like a mother ringing the dinner bell. Christ invites us for a family meal, a holy meal where our ancestors in the faith pull their chairs to the table alongside us. Come, family of God, Christ has prepared the feast; let us break bread together.

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

Considerations: Thank God for setting us in families who gather around tables that nurture our lives. Thank Christ for spreading wide a welcome table so that through his life, death, and resurrection, we are adopted into the family of God. Ask for the Holy Spirit to be present at the Lord's Table so that we might know the welcome of God and extend that welcome to others.

Words of Institution

Prayer after Communion

Bless

Song of Sending

Charge

Go from this place and share the good news of our belonging. May the Holy Spirit remind you that in Christ you are no longer orphans, but are adopted as God's very own children.

Benediction

And may the love and peace of our Triune God be with you this day, and every day. Amen!

HOMECOMING AND ALUMNI/AE

Connecting with alumni/ae can be an important and resourceful component of campus ministry. It offers students and ministers the chance to connect with those who have graduated in years past. It also provides alumni/ae a way of staying in touch with the ministry that nurtured them during some of their most formative years. This service centers around the idea that we are all part of a great cloud of witness—no matter what year we graduate, no matter what our major was/is, no matter what.

Some things to think about as you prepare for worship:

1. Ask alumni/ae to put the year they graduated and their major on name tags. Similarly, ask any current students to indicate their graduating year and their major on name tags.
2. Be sure to ask any current students (e.g., leadership) to be present and welcoming at all entrances into the worship space.
3. Prior to worship, allow alumni/ae and students plenty of time to gather and mingle. Shaping the beginning of worship as a “meet and greet” is perfectly acceptable. However, once it is time to begin, ask your leadership (e.g., musicians, liturgists) to gather people in.
4. Make room before, during, or after worship for memories to be shared.

Playlist

- “Come All You People,” GTG #388, STF #2274
- “O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing,” Carl Gotthelf Glaser, Charles Wesley, CCLI #1369
- “Will You Come and Follow Me (The Summons),” Iona Community, John Bell CCLI #4983527, (recommended before the Affirmation of Faith)
- “The Trees of the Field,” Steffi Geiser Rubin, Stuart Dauermann, CCLI #20546
- “Canticle of the Turning,” Rory Cooney
- “Learned a Lot,” Amos Lee, *Mission Bell* (recommended for slideshow during gathering)
- “In My Life,” the Beatles, *Rubber Soul*
- “Kyrie,” Mr. Mister, *The Best of Mr. Mister*

“I’m Not Who I Was,” Brandon Heath, *Don’t Get Comfortable*

“Your Misfortune,” Mike Doughty (recommended for slideshow during offering)

“Future/Past,” John Mark McMillan, CCLI #7016287

Gather

Gathering Music and Slideshow

Considerations: As people gather for worship, provide a slideshow set to music of alumni/ae and students. Compile pictures from mission trips, retreats, weekly worship/Bible studies, and so forth. If you take up an offering, see note on offering below and change this slideshow to show only alumni/ae, allowing the second slideshow to focus on current students.

Call To Worship

From Psalm 89:1–2 (*Year 3, Week 15*)

Option 1

Leader: I will sing of your steadfast love, O Lord, forever.

People: With my mouth I will proclaim your faithfulness to all generations.

Leader: I declare that your steadfast love is established forever.

People: Your faithfulness is as firm as the heavens.

Option 2

Leader: We are surrounded . . .

People: by full-time professionals, part-time workers, graduate students, parents, and newlyweds.

Leader: We are surrounded . . .

People: by double-majors, Greeks, independents, athletes, and musicians.

Leader: We are surrounded . . .

People: by alumni/alumnae, students, friends, family.

Leader: We are surrounded . . .

People: by a great cloud of witnesses. Brothers and sisters in Christ, come, let us worship God!

Considerations: On the second Call to Worship, change the language (e.g., full-time professionals, double-majors) to fit those attending the service.

Prayer

Eternal God, you are the great I Am, Alpha and Omega, beginning and end. Your Spirit moved among the waters of creation; your Spirit moves now among the waters of baptism. You are present among all the generations, and you call us together as one. As we dream dreams, tell stories, remember old times and celebrate new ones, draw us close to you as we worship together, that we may be inspired by you and one another. Through Christ and in Christ we pray. Amen.

Song

Call to Confession

The race is ahead of us. We yearn to run. But our feet stumble and get stuck in the muck of sin. So let us confess our shortcomings to God, that our feet may be freed for the road of discipleship before us.

Prayer of Confession

Lord, you tell us to lay aside the weight of sin that clings so closely. You call us to persevere, to endure, to keep our eyes upon our pioneer and perfecter, Jesus Christ. Yet, for whatever reason, we are unable to do what you say. Not only do we find it difficult to lay aside our sin, we discover that, in many ways, we are dependent upon our shortcomings. We give up, our eyes drop, and we are ashamed. Please forgive us! Remind us that we don't run the race alone: that you are with us, and that we are surrounded by brothers, sisters, alumni, students, and friends. Instill in us the courage to follow you, as your Son did all the way to the cross, that one day we might sit beside you in your kingdom. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Hear the good news! When we get stuck in sin, Christ brings us back. When our feet stumble, Christ carries us along. When we can't find our way, Christ leads us. Christ cares for us, and we are a forgiven and reconciled people. Thanks be to God. Amen.

Passing of the Peace

Leader: We come from east and west, north and south.
We gather together as graduates and as students.
We are united by grace, sustained by faith, and created for peace. May the peace of Jesus Christ be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. By your Spirit, open our senses, Lord, that we might receive such a faith as we receive your word. Amen.

Scripture

Hebrews 12:1–2 (*Year 4, Week 18*)

Considerations: In chapter 11, the writer of Hebrews describes some of the champions of the faith: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses (among others). These heroes are the ones we look to for inspiration, for courage, for instruction. Similarly, our students look to those who have gone before them for ideas, for wisdom, for storytelling. And alumni/ae look to students for idealism, for energy, for a picture of what's next. We depend and rely upon one another as we run the race before us. It's not something we can do on our own accord; we must go about it in community. And, as we do so, we point to the cross and empty tomb, taking our seats beside the living God and beside one another.

Reflection

Considerations: You might choose to have a student, or multiple students, craft a sermon sparked by the following questions. Or ask students and alumni/ae to gather in small groups together to discuss the questions. (Hint: provide the questions on cards for each group or project.) After some time in small groups, you may ask people to share what was said to the larger group:

- Who are your heroes of the faith?
- Who, in particular, has influenced your faith journey?
- What does the race of faith look like in your life right now?

Song of Reflection

Respond

Affirmation of Faith

(from A Brief Statement of Faith)

We trust in God,
whom Jesus called Abba, Father.
In sovereign love God created the world good
and makes everyone equally in God's image
male and female, of every race and people,
to live as one community.
But we rebel against God; we hide from our Creator.
Ignoring God's commandments,
we violate the image of God in others and ourselves,
accept lies as truth,
exploit neighbor and nature,
and threaten death to the planet entrusted to our care.
We deserve God's condemnation.
Yet God acts with justice and mercy to redeem creation.
In everlasting love,
the God of Abraham and Sarah chose a covenant
people
to bless all families of the earth.
Hearing their cry,
God delivered the children of Israel
from the house of bondage.
Loving us still,
God makes us heirs with Christ of the covenant.
Like a mother who will not forsake her nursing child,
like a father who runs to welcome the prodigal home,
God is faithful still.

Offering

Considerations: As you take up the offering, consider showing a student slideshow set to music (as a complement to the alumni slideshow at the beginning). Again, compile pictures from mission trips, retreats, weekly worship/Bible studies, and so forth. This may be a good opportunity to put a special monetary offering toward a project or charity that will be meaningful to both the alumni/ae and the students. It may be helpful to publicize this offering prior to the worship service.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

We give you thanks, generous God, for the gifts surrounding us: family, friends, community, people of all different ages, interests, and backgrounds. May what we offer glorify only you. May our lives reflect the body of which we all are part: the body of Christ. Amen.

Bless

Song

Charge

As we leave this place, may God remind us that we are never alone. God is with us. And we are together with everyone who calls upon your name. The great cloud of witnesses is real: we are surrounded by it. So unite us, hand in hand, step by step, as we go out to preach the gospel of peace and resurrection, sustained by the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

Benediction

Option 1

adapted from 2 Thessalonians 3:16 and Hebrews 12:1–2
(*Year 4, Week 18*)

Now may the Lord of peace be always in your sight,
granting peace at all times and in all ways both to you and
to the great cloud of witnesses that surrounds us.

Option 2

Traditional Gaelic Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,
may God hold you in the palm of his hand.

THANKSGIVING

As students prepare to return home, to friends' homes, or other places for the Thanksgiving holiday, this worship service provides the opportunity to focus intentionally on God's provision and our response for that provision. As the hubbub of the holidays, the stress of exams, and the mass consumerism of Christmas may be awaiting you as students return to campus, the focus of this service on recognizing God's gifts in our lives and choosing to be intentional about our own graciousness and thanksgiving offers a time set apart to acknowledge and praise God.

Playlist

"All Creatures of Our God and King," Francis of Assisi, CCLI #1503

"All Creatures of Our God and King," as performed by David Crowder Band

"We Give Thanks," Caedmon's Call, *In the Company of Angels, Vol. 2*

"In the Lord, I'll Be Ever Thankful," Taizé, (*Recommend placing this song between Scripture readings for reflection. May serve well as a Call to Worship also.*)

"Too Proud," Aaron Strumpel, Laura Elizabeth Thornton, Timothy Thornton, CCLI #5316533 (*Recommend using this song for Reflection during the Offering.*)

"Agnus Dei," Michael W. Smith, CCLI #626713

"O Give Thanks," Aaron Lindsey, Israel Houghton, Meleasa Houghton, CCLI # 4568667

"Grateful for Your Love," Ellie Holcomb, *Magnolia*

Gather

Gathering Music

Call to Worship

adapted from 1 Chronicles 16

Leader: Sing, children of God. Let choruses of God's glory catch the breeze and dance their way to the sky.

People: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good! God's steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: Seek, children of God. Make life a treasure hunt for signs of God's strength and faithfulness.

People: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good! God's steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: Remember, children of God. May your daydreams overflow with memories of miracles. May your night dreams replay God's wonders unfathomable.

People: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good! God's steadfast love endures forever.

Leader: Worship, children of God. Bow the knees of your trembling heart before our holy Creator.

People: O give thanks to the Lord, for God is good! God's steadfast love endures forever. Let us worship God!

Opening Prayer

Holy and merciful God, today we thank you for life. We thank you for our family, our friends, our acquaintances, and even those we have never met.

We thank you for every taste of bread, for every sip of water, for all the ways you provide for us and fill us up.

We praise you for opportunities to learn and better ourselves, for the gift of conversation, for reminders we are not alone.

Remove from us any vain thoughts of deservedness, because everything on this earth is a gift that we thank you for. Keep us mindful of your great provision, that our gratitude may bubble up quick and fierce.

In your name, we pray. Amen.

Song of Praise

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Gracious Creator, so much has been given to us, yet we often take it for granted. Remind us that we are entitled to nothing. You call us to live in loving community with others, but we place our wants in front of helping others. While Jesus showed us how to humble ourselves and serve, we are reluctant to give too much of our time or resources away, in case we need them. Forgive us, O God, for all the times we've hoarded your gifts, failed to say thank you, or allowed our worry to get in the way of fully loving. Reshape us, that our lives may be reoriented to graciousness and thanksgiving. And hear us now as we offer our personal prayers of confession to you. (*Silence*) Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayers. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

from Psalm 103:8–12 (*Year 3, Week 27*)

Brothers and sisters in Christ, when it comes to God, we do not get what we deserve. Instead, the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. God does not deal with us according to our sins and does not repay us according to our wrongdoings. God's grace and

love reach higher than the heavens. And as far as the east is from the west, so far has God removed our sins from us. Let us live with joy into this fresh start.

Encounter

Scripture

Deuteronomy 26:1–11

Silent Reflection

Song

Scripture

Philippians 4:4–9 (*Year 4, Week 6*)

Reflection

Considerations: Recommend the following as possibilities for the reflection:

From Deuteronomy:

- Invite students to offer reflections of thanksgiving. Ask them to contemplate what the “fruits” of this year have been for them. Select one particular point for thanksgiving. Have them consider how they might perceive God’s hand at work in providing this particular blessing. How might some of this blessing be harvested and returned to God as an offering?
- Reflect upon the “fruits” of your campus ministry as a whole. How have you seen God at work in your campus ministry, on your campus as a whole, in the local community, among your individual students? How might you challenge your group to offer some of these blessings back to God.
- Allow the students to take action. Give students an opportunity to give their “first fruits” up to God by setting up a table/station. Provide pens/slips of paper and ask the students to write what it is they have not yet given back to God, what they haven’t fully thanked God for. Then allow students to throw their papers crumpled/folded/however at the bottom of a cross in front of the room.
- Invite students to share with the rest of those at the worship service what the “first fruits” have recently been in their life. This can be done by having two leaders walk around with microphones—waiting for students to raise their hands or by simply telling students to stand if they want to share. Students love hearing from each other.

From Philippians:

- What does it look like to rejoice in God’s goodness? How might college students risk letting their faith be evident to all?
- What are anxieties that students can turn over to God? How does it look different to take your fears to God in prayers of thanksgiving, versus just appealing to God for help?
- Where do you see God’s peace reigning in your particular context?
- How have you seen your students and members of your community living out their thanksgiving in ways that are noble, pure, admirable? How might you challenge one another to be more overt about your faith lives and gratitude?
- Thanksgiving is a spiritual practice. Consider practicing thanksgiving together. Ideas include having individuals keep a thanksgiving journal (or rotating one journal through your campus ministry); creating thanksgiving Facebook page or hashtag (offering concrete thanks and active response to God for encounters in everyday life); engaging in a service project together as a way of actively saying thank you to God.

Respond

Offering

Considerations: Thanksgiving is a time marked by sharing meals with family and friends. But for many people in our country and around the world there is simply not enough food for the table. Consider challenging your students to one of these offerings which may be done before, during, or after the service:

- Have students bring canned goods and nonperishables for a local food bank.
- Volunteer as a group at a local soup kitchen or food bank prior to worship or as a response to worship.
- Designate that monetary gifts collected for the offering will be shared with a local food pantry. Talk with the food pantry beforehand about what they need in particular. Maybe your students can provide turkeys for a handful of families and drop them at the food pantry or deliver them to the families themselves.

Prayer of Dedication

Help us who have received so freely from you
to give just as freely, when it is our turn,
and so have the pleasure of giving
as well as the happiness of receiving.
Amen.

Communion

Invitation to the Table

Leader: People will gather around tables all across our country this week. Some will be filled with old, familiar scents of recipes passed down through the generations, laughter, parades, and football. Some will gather amidst old arguments and family conflict. Some will file into shelters packed with tables in neat rows. Others will just stay away.

No matter whether your Thanksgiving table is decorated with the construction paper turkey you made in kindergarten, with your little handprint and some colored feathers, or whether your family is sure to forget the cranberries but whip out the same old jabs and cruel silence, you are welcome at *this* table. And it is not me, but Christ, who welcomes you here, to be fed, to share in a holy meal in Christ's own presence and with the crazy collection of God's children from every place and time. This is the the Lord's Table. Let us gather and be fed.

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

Considerations: This prayer provides space for students to share their thanksgiving. Consider having students write their thanksgiving onto strips of paper to be read during the prayer, or provide instructions and space for them to be called out during the prayer. You may also fill the space with appropriate prayers on behalf of your community.

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them up to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

Holy God, we were made for giving thanks. So often our lives and our lips don't express our gratitude to you for the ways you work in our world and in our lives. But hear us now as we call to you in our thanksgiving. (*Offer up the prayers that students submitted or allow space for students to say aloud their prayers.*)

Since before the beginning, you've had a heart for making things beautiful. You harnessed the power of chaos and midnight and created a world—fragile and mighty, cracked and flowing. You whispered words of hope and promise and possibility. And some people followed with great courage—offering us examples of prophecy, service, worship, and obedience. And when we didn't follow, you were firm but tender, giving us fresh start after fresh start. Thank you for your faithfulness, O God. May our gratitude take the form of obedience, praise, and mercy.

Thank you for creating this holy meal. Thank you that before Jesus died and went on to rise and live with you, he knew we would need reminders that we are welcome, included, nourished, and loved. As we gather around these simple gifts of bread and cup, may we be reminded of your extreme welcome. May we know that we each have a place reserved just for us—that at this table no one can ever be uninvited.

Stir up your Spirit among us that our thank offering of bread and cup may become holy gifts of your presence and promise. And may we be filled by these good gifts for grateful living as Christ's body in the world.

We pray all of this in the name of Jesus Christ and join our voices together to say the prayer that Jesus said, saying, . . . (*insert Lord's prayer here*).

Words of Institution

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Prayer after Communion

Lord, when we eat this bread and drink from this cup, may we always be reminded of the sacrifice made so that we can be nurtured. You are our shepherd God, providing and caring for us all.

God, all powerful, we thank you for the joy of living. Give us boldness to share this joy with others and to boast of your selflessness.

God of all that is neat and creatively messy, we give you thanks for your work among us. Create your order of care in the world through even the likes of us. Amen.

Bless

Song of Sending

Charge

Benediction

Option 1

“Blessing of St. Francis”

Now, wherever we are,
and in every place,
and at every hour,
throughout each time of each day,
may all of us honestly and humbly believe,
holding in our hearts
the desire always
to love, honor,
adore, serve,
praise, bless,
glorify, exalt,
magnify, and give thanks
to the most high and eternal God,
Trinity and Unity.
Amen.

Option 2

Go in peace, trusting in the grace-filled vision and the nonstop provision of our great God. Out of hope and trust, gratitude and thanksgiving, may we risk setting aside a portion of our blessings to return to God and show love to neighbor. And may the grace of our all-gracious God, Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit, go with you this day and every day. Amen.

ADVENT

In campus ministry settings, it is often the case that there are only one or two Advent services before students return home for break. Even on commuter campuses, students will frequently travel near the end of Advent and not be present for the third and fourth weeks of Advent and Christmas. For that reason, it can be helpful in many campus ministry settings to try and tell the whole story of Advent in only one or two services. In some contexts, it may be known that most students will return to a Christian family that will celebrate Christmas. In other contexts, this might not be true, and it will be especially important that the story of Advent and Christmas are told well through the life and worship of the campus ministry.

Playlist

“Wait for the Lord,” Taizé

“Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus,” Charles Wesley,
Michael Adler, William Walker, CCLI #4850021

“All Who Are Thirsty,” Brenton Brown, Glenn Robertson,
CCLI #2489542

“40,” U2, *War*

“Soon and Very Soon,” Andraé Crouch, CCLI #11249

“Lover of the Light,” Mumford and Sons, *Babel*

“Mary Did You Know,” CCLI #839224, Buddy Greene,
Mark Lowry

“In the Bleak Midwinter,” Christina Georgina Rossetti,
Gustav Theodore Holst, Jan Quintus Zwart

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,” Charles Wesley,
John Purifoy

“Emmanuel,” JJ Heller, *Wake Up the World*

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” version by Pentatonix

SERVICE #1

Gather

Song

Call to Worship

Option 1

(Adapted from Jan Richardson, *Night Visions: Searching the Shadows of Advent and Christmas*, [Orlando, FL: Wanton Gospeller Press, 1998], pg. 56)

Leader: A seed in the ground.

People: A flame in the darkness.

Leader: A hand outstretched.

People: A child in the womb.

Leader: Hope starts small and overtakes us,

People: stretching the borders of what we have known.

Option 2

Adapted from Isaiah 35:1–6

Leader: The wilderness shall be glad and the desert blossom and rejoice.

People: Like the crocus it will blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing.

Leader: Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees.

People: Say to those who are fearful, “Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.”

Leader: Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.

People: Then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongue of the speechless sing for joy.

Leader: For water shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert.

People: Let us worship God!

Lighting of Advent Wreath

Considerations: Depending on your context, you may want to explain the meaning of Advent before lighting the wreath. Here’s an example: “Advent begins four weeks before Christmas and invites us to practice waiting and preparation. A piece of the Advent tradition is the lighting of an Advent wreath. The four candles in the wreath are the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love. The circle of greens around the candles symbolizes the everlasting life we have in Christ, and the center candle represents the person of Christ. And so, in the spirit of Advent, we light the candle of _____.”

You can find additional help at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/advent/ and pcusa.org/media/uploads/worship/pdfs/lighting_the_advent_wreath.pdf

Opening Prayer

Loving God,
Thanks for being with us in times of light and darkness.
In this Advent season of waiting, sustain and strengthen us.
Help us recognize you in unexpected, hidden places.
Help us to join you in planting seeds of life and light
in the midst of the dark places of our lives and the world.
Amen.

Song of Praise

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

Assurance of Forgiveness

We stumble, that's what we do. So, on our best days, we get to stumble toward the light. Because of who God is through Jesus Christ, we're forgiven. Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the light no darkness can overcome. Let us all be lovers of the light and let our light shine through Christ. Amen!

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Option 1

Scripture

Psalm 27:14 (*Year 1, Week 22*)

Isaiah 64:1–4

Romans 8:18–23

Silent Reflection

Considerations: Psalm 27:14 reads, “Wait for the LORD; be strong, and let your heart take courage; wait for the LORD.”

Consider the Scripture verse above. Meditate on it. Pray it. Take your time. When you are ready, write down some personal reflections about it. You are welcome to use the following questions as a guide:

- In general, is it easy or difficult for you to wait?
- In what places of your life have you been waiting for God?
- Is that waiting full of hope or anxiety?

- Do you find time to “wait for the Lord” in your life? If so, what does that look like? If not, how might you start?
- Where in the world do you find people longing for the Lord to tear open the heavens and come down?

Option 2

Scripture

Psalm 62:1–8 (*Year 2, Week 22*)

Reflection

Considerations: Waiting is a big theme in the season of Advent. It's also a big theme in the lives of college students (as it is at any age). We are not a culture who waits—for anyone or anywhere. We stink at waiting. What if we looked at waiting as a spiritual discipline? How would that change how we practice waiting in our daily lives, not just in the season of Advent? Are we willing to wait for God alone? How do we find hope in waiting? How do we find refuge in God through waiting? What does it look like to wait during exams and the season of Advent?

Respond

Group Reflection, Sharing, and Prayer

Affirmation of Faith

(*Magnificat*)

My soul doth magnify the Lord
and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
For he hath regarded
the lowliness of his handmaiden.
For behold, from henceforth
all generations shall call me blessed.
For he that is mighty hath magnified me
and holy is his name.
And his mercy is on them that fear him
throughout all generations.
He hath shewed strength with his arm
he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.
He hath put down the mighty from their seat
and hath exalted the humble and meek.
He hath filled the hungry with good things
and the rich he hath sent empty away.
He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel
as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever.

Prayers of the People

Song

Offering

Considerations: On a card, have students write down what they will do to bear the light of Christ in the world this week. Have them offer these commitments.

Communion

(*Based on *Book of Common Worship*, ©1993. Westminster John Knox Press. www.wjkbooks.com. Used with permission.)

Invitation

Here at the table we have just a taste of God's end-time feast.

Here at the table we join with all in creation in hunger for God's upside-down kingdom. This table does not belong to an elite few.

This table belongs to our Lord.

And our Lord Jesus Christ invites us all to come, and have a foretaste of the heavenly banquet! Come and see that God is good!

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of Advent hope, we give you thanks and joy for who you are, what you've done, and what you promise to do.

God of light, since the beginning you shined your light into dark places. Hovering over the darkness of nothing, you spoke light and life into being. From dark soil, you molded and formed us in your image, calling us to love you and care for your world.

But we did not trust you. We followed our own way, and turned away from you. Still, you did not give up on us. Though we were unfaithful, you were faithful still.

Over and over again, you broke into the shadows of our lives and world. You sent servants and prophets to bear light on our darkened paths, guiding us back to your way.

Then, out of your great love for the world, you gave us your Son. In Jesus Christ you became for us the Light of the world. Through Jesus, your word became flesh, and dwelt among us. Jesus showed us the way to live and love.

Jesus healed the sick, fed the hungry, opened blind eyes, broke bread with outcasts, and proclaimed the good news of your upside-down kingdom where the first are last and the last are first.

On the cross, Jesus gave himself for the life of the world. Rising from the grave, he won for us victory over death. Seated at your right hand, he leads us to eternal life. We praise you that Christ now reigns with you in glory and will one day come again to make all things new.

Remembering your gracious acts in Jesus Christ, we take from your creation this bread and this wine and joyfully celebrate his dying and his rising, even as we await for his return.

And now, God of hope, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us, and upon these gifts of bread and wine, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ.

By your spirit make us one with Christ, that we may be one with all who share this feast, throughout every time and place. And as this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the body of Christ in your hurting and hungry world.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever.

And now, with the confidence of the children of God, let us pray together the prayer your Son taught saying: (*Insert the Lord's Prayer here.*)

Prayer After Communion

God of hope, Bread of life,

Thank you for feeding us at your table.

Where there is despair, send us out as agents of hope.

Where there is fear, send us out as agents of peace,

until that day when you come again

and make all things right.

Amen.

Bless

Song of Sending

Sending Prayer

Charge

Go into the world in hope and anticipation, eagerly preparing for the advent of Jesus and waiting for the light that shines in the darkness.

Benediction

SERVICE #2

This service offers another take on the tradition of the hanging of the greens. In this service, there are opportunities for both tangible offerings and sharing stories. At the end of semester, there is usually a lot of stress; therefore, we recommend asking the students several weeks beforehand to share their stories so that they may have time to prepare and reflect. You'll also need cedar chips, pieces of holly and ivy, an evergreen wreath, and a lit Christmas tree. This service could also be done in candlelight.

Gather

Call to Worship

(*taken from <http://processandfaith.org/resources/liturgy/hanging-greens-first-sunday-advent>. Used with permission.)

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the birth of Jesus?

People: With branches of cedar, the tree of excellence and strength.

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the eternal Christ?

People: With garlands of pine and fir, whose leaves are ever living, evergreen.

Leader: How shall we prepare this house for the prophet of Galilee?

People: With wreaths of holly and ivy, telling of his passion, death and resurrection.

Leader: How shall we prepare our hearts for this revelation of God?

People: By hearing again the words of the prophets and the promises of God.

Leader: For in the story of Jesus we see revealed the transforming love and power of God. We are reminded anew of God's vision of wholeness, justice and peace for all of creation.

People: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Encounter and Respond

Cedar Wood: A Sign of Majesty

Jeremiah 23:5

Considerations: Have cedar wood chips available to place on the table upon reading this passage.

Story

Considerations: Have someone share two to three minutes about where God has been working in his/her life and how she/he is waiting in anticipation of Christ's coming into the world.

Song

Holly and Ivy: Signs of Pain and Love

Isaiah 53:2–5

Considerations: Have pieces of holly and strands of ivy available to place on the table upon reading this passage.

Story

Considerations: Have someone share two to three minutes about where God has been working in his/her life and how she/he is waiting in anticipation of Christ's coming into the world.

Song

Evergreen Wreath: Sign of Life and Peace

Isaiah 9:2, 6–7

Considerations: Have an Advent wreath available on a separate table, if possible, and bring it out upon the reading of this passage.

Story

Considerations: Have someone share two to three minutes about where God has been working in his/her life and how she/he is waiting in anticipation of Christ's coming into the world.

Song

Christmas Tree: Light in Darkness

John 1:1–5; 8–12 (*Year 1, Week 1*)

Considerations: Have a lit Christmas tree available somewhere up front and light it upon reading this passage.

Story

Considerations: Have someone share two to three minutes about where God has been working in his/her life and how she/he is waiting in anticipation of Christ's coming into the world.

Bless

(Pick up remainder of service with the Sending Prayer above in Service #1.)

SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

A Service of Lessons and Carols offers the opportunity to connect Advent readings with the Christmas story. This is especially fitting, as students are typically not on campus for Christmas. Lessons and carols incorporate Scripture readings with music between each reading and with no sermon following those readings. Another option is to divide readings from the first three chapters of Luke into the number of services or events that you have during Advent and pair them with Advent lectionary readings from Isaiah, Micah, Zephaniah, or elsewhere.

You might consider joining with other Christian groups on campus to serve the larger, ecumenical Christian community on campus and beyond.

In some contexts, it may be known that most students will return to a Christian family that will celebrate Christmas. In other contexts, this might not be true, and it will be especially important that the story of Advent and Christmas are told well throughout this time in the life and worship of campus ministry.

Playlist

“Canticle of the Turning,” Rory Cooney
“Come Darkness, Come Light,” Mary Chapin Carpenter,
Come Darkness, Come Light: 12 Songs of Christmas
“Wake Up the World,” JJ Heller, *Wake Up the World*
“O Come, All Ye Faithful,” GTG #133, PH #42
“Once in Royal David’s City,” GTG #140, PH #49
“O Little Town of Bethlehem,” GTG #121, PH #43
“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel,” GTG #88, PH #9
“It Came upon the Midnight Clear,” GTG #123, PH #38
“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming,” GTG #129, PH #48
“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,” GTG # 119, PH #31
“Away in a Manger,” GTG #114 and #115, PH #24 and #25
“Angels We Have Heard on High,” GTG #113, PH #23
“Silent Night, Holy Night,” GTG #122, PH #63
“We Three Kings,” GTG #151, PH #66
“Joy to the World,” GTG #134, PH #40
(You can find suggestions for music and alternate lessons and carols services at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/advent/.)

Gather

Gathering Music

Call to Worship

Option 1
Isaiah 9:2–7

Leader: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.

People: Those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them light has shined.

Leader: For a child has been born for us, a son given to us.

People: Authority rests upon his shoulders.

Leader: And he is named Wonderful Counselor.

People: Mighty God.

Leader: Everlasting Father.

People: Prince of Peace.

Option 2
Luke 1:46–49

Leader: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

People: For you have looked with favor upon our lowliness.

Leader: You bless us, for you have done mighty things for us.

People: Holy is your name!

Opening Prayer

God of light, in this season pregnant with anticipation and expectation, we cast our eyes upon Bethlehem, shepherds, wise men, angels on high, and a child lying in a manger. We sense a change in the air, an excitement we can’t fully grasp. We just know something is different. Shed light upon us as we engage the mystery of this season. Birth new understandings within us so that we might see your power, majesty, and love displayed among the vulnerable, weak, and innocent of the world. Amen.

Call to Confession

God entered our world, being born in human likeness, disregarding equality with God as something to be exploited. Yet, we exploit others and play the role of gods, ignoring the example of Christ, born unto us this season. So let us now claim the ways we have sinned, so that we may be forgiven. Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

Magnificent God, time and time again, you tell us not to be afraid. You bring us good news of great joy for all people—that a Savior is born to us, the Messiah, Christ the Lord. Yet, in spite of what you tell us, we live in fear, afraid of what people may think of us, afraid of failure, afraid of being alone. Your good news is just too good to be true. We doubt it. We take it for granted. Forgive our lack of faith, O God! During this season, inspire our glance heavenward, where we find a star guiding us to Bethlehem. Enable our words to be words of peace, hope, and faith, thus sharing the good news of great joy to all surrounding us, in the name of the child lying in a manger, Jesus the Christ. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Leader: Rejoice! Rejoice! The story is true.

People: Through Jesus Christ, born to us in Bethlehem, we are forgiven. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Encounter

Scripture

Genesis 2:4b–9, 15–25 (*Year 1, Week 1*)

hymn, song, or instrumental music

Isaiah 40:1–11

hymn, song, or instrumental music

Isaiah 65:17–25

hymn, song, or instrumental music

Isaiah 7:10–15

hymn, song, or instrumental music

Jeremiah 33:14–16

hymn, song, or instrumental music

Micah 5:2–5a

hymn, song, or instrumental music

Luke 3:1–6

hymn, song, or instrumental music

Luke 1:5–25

hymn, song, or instrumental music

Luke 1:26–56 (*Year 3, Week 1*)

hymn, song, or instrumental music

Considerations: A reading from Luke 2 may be added here to complete the Advent/Christmas story if needed.

Respond

Affirmation of Faith

(From A Declaration of Faith, ch. 6, II)

The Word which was with God from the beginning was embodied in Jesus Christ.

We hold that what God says to us and does for us centers in Jesus Christ our living Lord as he is remembered, known, and expected.

In Christ, God's Word of acceptance takes flesh: by grace through faith

we are set right with God,

adopted as children of God,

not because of anything we have done,

but because of what Christ has done.

Offering

Considerations: Allow participants to join in the story by inviting them forward to a manger, possibly while singing “We Three Kings.” Participants may offer their own monetary gifts, or gifts of canned goods or supplies for a mission organization supported by the ministry.

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

Considerations: Include prayers for the conclusion of the semester and safe travels, where applicable.

Communion

Invitation to the Table

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

(Adapted from *Book of Common Worship*, ©1993.

Westminster John Knox Press. www.wjkbooks.com. Used with permission.)

Leader: The Lord be with you.

People: And also with you.

Leader: Lift up your hearts.

People: We lift them to the Lord.

Leader: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.

God of all time and place, it is our greatest joy to offer you thanks, to offer you praise. You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image, called us to love and serve you, and in our unfaithfulness, you have never turned away. Thank you for every work to free us from our sin, for every time you have pulled us back to your promises, for every person you have placed in our lives to speak truth to power and show us your way.

We thank you for your Word, for Christ, one with you since before the beginning of time. Thank you for your love so expansive that you would send your Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior. In him, your Word took on skin and bone like ours and lived among us, full of grace and truth. And we glorify you, Emmanuel, God with us!

Considerations: A refrain of praise may be inserted here.

Therefore we praise you, joining our voices with the choirs of angels who ever sing to the glory of your name.

Thank you for teaching us humility in Jesus' fragile beginnings—who, helpless as an infant, showed the power of your love; who, poor in the things of the world, brought the wealth of your grace; who, rejected by many, welcomed all who sought him.

Even as we prepare for birth, we give thanks for Christ's dying and rising, in which you gave birth to your church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit.

Remembering your gracious acts in Jesus Christ, we take from your creation this bread and this wine and joyfully celebrate Jesus' dying and rising as we await the day of Christ's return. With thanksgiving we offer ourselves to you to be a living and holy sacrifice, dedicated to your service.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us and the gifts of this table, that the bread we break and the cup we bless may be the communion of the body and blood of Christ. By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, and one with those who have gone before us and those who come after us, that we may be united at this feast which transcends time and place.

As this bread is Christ's body for us, send us out to be the body of Christ in the world.

Considerations: Intercessions for the church and the world may be included here.

Empower us by your Spirit, O God, to be Christ's presence in the world even as Jesus was God-with-us. Give us courage to speak Christ's truth, to seek his justice, and to love with his love. Keep us faithful in your service, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast with all your saints in the joy of your eternal realm.

Through Christ, with Christ, in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory and honor are yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen.

Words of Institution

Prayer after Communion

Gracious Lord of hosts, may this bread and this cup continue to nourish us as we leave this place. May this meal also give us courage and sustain us as we go out into this world to speak truth to power, to seek God's love and justice, and to wait with expectant hope for the birth of our Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bless

Song of Sending

Charge

Christ has come, God-with-us, Emmanuel—born into the world in the sanctuary of a stable, with a newborn's cry. Christ has come! And Christ will come again! Go into the world carrying the light of that great hope, eyes open to the in-breaking of God in the darkness, the ordinary, the now. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Benediction

And may the love of God, the presence of Christ, and the power of the Holy Spirit be with you this day, and every day. Amen.

NEW YEAR/ EPIPHANY

This worship service may be used for a New Year's Eve/Day service, or for an Epiphany service. Epiphany is traditionally celebrated on January 6. Epiphany Sunday is traditionally the Sunday between January 2 and 8. Epiphany literally means "appearance," and it commemorates the visit of the Magi to Jesus following his birth.

Playlist

You may find appropriate hymns for this service in the Epiphany sections of the *Presbyterian Hymnal* (blue), hymn numbers 62–69, and the new Presbyterian hymnal, *Glory to God*.

"Indescribable," Jesse Reeves, Laura Story, CCLI #4403076

"Shine," Matt Redman, CCLI #4831435

"Awake! Awake and Greet the New Morn," Marty Haugen, GTG #107

"The Sun and the Moon," Pete Kipley, Phil Wickham, CCLI #5990148

"Little Town," Linford Detweiler, CCLI #5305269

"Let Your Light Shine," Bethany Dillon, Ed Cash

"This Little Light of Mine/M'Lilo Vutha Mathanjeni/If You Ever Need the Lord," Soweto Gospel Choir, *Soweto Gospel Choir: Live at the Nelson Mandela Theatre*

Gather

Call to Worship

Option 1

New Year Suggestion: from Ecclesiastes 3:1–13
(Year 2, Week 11)

Considerations: This reading is designed to be led by four participants. It should flow together as though it was read by one voice. It will be necessary to practice beforehand.

1: For everything there is a season,
1, 2: and a time for every matter under heaven:
3: a time to be born,
4: and a time to die;
1: a time to plant,
2: and a time to pluck up what is planted;
3: a time to kill,

3, 4: and a time to heal;
1: a time to break down,
2, 3: and a time to build up;
4: a time to weep,
1, 4: and a time to laugh;
2: a time to mourn,
3, 4: and a time to dance;
1: a time to throw away stones,
2: and a time to gather
2, 3: stones together;
4, 1: a time to embrace,
2: and a time
3: to refrain from embracing;
4: a time to seek, and a time to lose;
1: a time to keep,
2: and a time to throw away;
3: a time to tear, and a time to sew;
4: a time to keep silence (*pause and count to three*)
1: and
2, 3, 4: a time to speak;
1, 2: a time to love,
3: and a time to hate;
4: a time for war,
1: and a time for peace.
2: God has made everything suitable for its time.
3: I know that whatever God does
3, 4: endures forever.
1: Nothing can be added to it.
2: Nothing can be taken away.
3, 4: God has done this
4, 1: so that all should
2: stand
3: in
1: awe
1, 2, 3, 4: Let us worship God!

Option 2

Epiphany Suggestion: from Psalm 72 (Year 3, Week 2)

Leader: Give the king your justice, O God. Grant righteousness to the king's son.

People: Make him the defender of the poor, the rescuer of every needy child, the crusher of oppression.

Leader: May he be like rain falling on fields, like showers watering the earth.

People: In his days, may righteousness flourish and peace abound, until the moon is no more.

Reflection

Considerations: Visual suggestion for either service:
On screen, display the painting *Starry Night*
by Vincent van Gogh

Read:

Vincent van Gogh painted this, his famous painting *Starry Night*, while he was held in the grip of a debilitating disease, and feared he would never escape his suffering. It's a fear we all know, because each of us has faced our own personal torment, whether it's disease, the loss of a loved one, financial problems, addiction, or other troubles that make us wonder whether God knows of our suffering, whether he will ever truly deliver us from affliction. In such moments it is tempting to collapse in hopelessness.

So imagine van Gogh in just such a moment of despair, when he is struck by the memory of one of those amazing night skies. He recalls that sense that he is *not* alone, that there *is* a living, infinite, loving God whose awesome creation reminds us, sometimes, that he has never left our side.

And so the sky swirls across the canvas, full of vitality and power that speak of God's presence. The stars don't just sparkle; they explode in radiance. The earth itself responds to the movement in the heavens, forming its own living waves in the mountains and the rolling trees beneath them. Windows in the sleepy village glow with the same light that illuminates the universe. The church steeple struggles to point to God, but it's dwarfed by the cypress trees at the left, which capture the joy of the creation around them by erupting in a living flame of praise.

Today we gather to worship the God who has heard his people cry and has acted to calm our fears, heal our hurts, and dry our tears. That's what the angels sang about.

Song of Praise

Opening Prayer

Option 1

New Year

God of fresh starts, we gather in the first moments of a new year. Some of us look back at (*insert year*) and rejoice for all the moments of healing, hope, laughter, and growth. Others of us look back and are ready to wipe our hands clean of days that tried us—our patience, our health, our relationships, our sense of self. No matter how we feel about the last days or weeks or months, we pause at the beginning of this new year to reorient ourselves toward you. Open our hearts in the quiet of this hour that we might be attentive to how you might be calling us, assuring us, challenging

us for the new year. May this time of worship be but a tiny glimpse of our shared walk in the year to come. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

Option 2

Epiphany

God of the Magi, since before forever, you have been the light that shines in the darkness. You molded the fire of the sun in your palms and flung it against the night. You set a pillar of fire to guide the Israelites across the chaos of the Red Sea and into freedom. You sent your Son as a beacon of hope to our aching world, the truest light of what it means to be human. And you shined up a star in the middle of midnight that the Magi might find the baby savior and worship. We pray, that this Epiphany you will shine your light into our lives that we might see you anew. As the Wise Men from the East bowed before a hay-filled feed trough, we bow our hearts before you, now. Amen.

Option 3

Prayer of Confession

God of new beginnings and new life, we confess that we aren't always open to offer fresh starts to others or to ourselves. We wallow in our own hurt and pain, forgetting that through Christ, we have been forgiven and that we're to forgive others as well, though forgiving is no easy task. As this new year begins, may we walk closer with you, O Lord, and be open to the bright hope and light that only you can bring forth into the helplessness and darkness that often surround us. Forgive our closed and broken hearts and open us to new possibilities and reconciliation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

The old is gone and the new is bursting forth! Watch out! God is doing a new thing! Friends, hear and believe the good news! In Jesus Christ, we're a forgiven people. Thanks be to God! Hallelujah and Amen.

Encounter

Scripture

New Year: 2 Corinthians 5:16–21
John 1:1–15 (*Year 1, Week 1*)
Isaiah 43: 16–21

Epiphany: Matthew 2:1–12
Isaiah 60:1–6

Video

New Year: *Shine His Light* (featuring spoken word artist Amena Brown), WorshipHouse Media

Epiphany: *His Star Still Shines* WorshipHouseMedia

Reflection

Considerations: For this service you may want to reflect on what it means to worship a God whose “mercies are new every morning.” No matter what we have done or not done, we can always start fresh and begin again as new creations in the light of Christ.

Either as part of the reflection or as part of the offering, you may invite students to practice the ancient Christian practice of examen, or self-examination. You could do this by handing out pieces of paper with small images of empty trashcans and have students write something they want to let go of or throw away from the past year. They can then crumple their papers and throw them away into a trash can placed in front of the worship space. Then, you can hand out small images of suitcases, and invite students to write something they wish to take with them into the new year. Encourage them to take the suitcase with them and put it in a place where they can see it on a regular basis.

Respond

Offering

Considerations: At the end of the Magi’s visit, they return home by another way. But that doesn’t keep Herod from killing all the baby boys in Bethlehem. And Jesus is forced into refugee status in Egypt. Consider setting aside your offering to offer support to an immigration, refugee, or anti-genocide agency. Some possibilities:

- Presbyterian Disaster Assistance offers refugee aid. (www.pcusa.org/pda)
- Church World Service has extensive refugee resettlement and integration opportunities. They also have a wealth of resources for education. (www.cwsglobal.org)
- PC(USA) World Mission supports mission co-workers around the world. Consider searching in areas of the world where genocide or refugee resettlement is happening. You can also pray for and write to mission co-workers in these areas by name. (presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/)

Song

New Year’s Resolutions or Star Prayers

- Provide students with paper and pens and invite them to write their prayers for how they might live into God’s hopes for them in the new year. You may collect them as an offering or have them placed in a set location (to give students the opportunity to come forward.)
- Give students star-shaped paper and have them write prayers of thanksgiving for how God has shined light into their lives and the world. Ask them to also write prayers of intercession for people and places that need to see God’s light and hope.

After all are collected, offer up a prayer similar to this. (You may consider providing space for students to lift up their own prayers.)

All-loving God who is the light that shines in the darkness, we give you thanks that throughout all time you have proven to be faithful, standing by us even when we push you away. We give you thanks that as we step into a new year, we can trust that you are already there bidding us to journey with you. We lift up to you the hopes that we have written on these scraps of paper. We pray that you will show us how we can respond to your light and live into your dreams for us, in (*insert year*) and every year. Amen.

Considerations: Include a remembrance of baptism in your service. The liturgy in the PC(USA) *Book of Common Worship* (pp. 447–453) ties nicely to God’s works of grace throughout time. One of the meanings of baptism is the cleansing of sin. The water serves as a visual reminder that God provides us with opportunities for a new start (over and over again.) What a powerful way to begin a new year!

Bless

Song of Sending

Charge

Option 1

Shine! Let your light shine! Be generous and loving with others and they will shine, too. Together, we will shine in the darkness and be a light to the world. As you go from this place, shine and be a guiding light for others so that they may see the light of Christ. Amen.

Option 2

Read and do the following as the Charge:

“If we shine, isn’t it because we’re being shined upon? We aren’t the lamps; we’re the mirrors.”

Light three votive candles. Then place them on a long sheet of aluminum foil and say:

“The foil not only makes the candles brighter—they seem hotter as well. Make no mistake: without the flame itself—the light which we are called to magnify—the whole thing is nothing but a waste of aluminum foil.”

As you leave, consider:

How can you reflect God’s light to those around you?

How can you make this a year of shining (not whining)?

How can the light shine more energetically through all of us as we go about our work in the world?

Be blessed—knowing you are shined upon!

Benediction

In this new year, may the light and love of God shine upon you. May the grace and peace of Jesus Christ bring light unto us. And may the friendship of the Holy Spirit offer new possibilities for reconciliation. Amen.

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the season in the church year known as Lent. Lent is a time to prepare for the celebration of Easter and to renew our life in the mystery of the saving life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. We begin this holy season by acknowledging our need for repentance and for the mercy and forgiveness proclaimed in the gospel of Jesus Christ. We begin our journey to Easter with the sign of ashes, a biblical symbol of mourning and penitence. This ancient sign speaks of the fragility of human life and our awareness that, try as we might, we cannot save ourselves. We need God.

If there is an imposition of ashes, you may want to ask people to gather beforehand to help you make the ashes by burning palm branches saved from last year's Palm Sunday service. In a shallow dish, mingle the cooled ashes with a little olive or almond oil for the service, testing that the mixture is not too oily so that you get a good ashen cross when applied to skin. Wood ashes will not work and are caustic to human skin. You can buy ashes at a church supply store or borrow some from a local church that makes their own and has plenty of ashes to share.

Playlist

"Glorious," Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, CCLI #4674135
"Humble Thyself in the Sight of the Lord," CCLI #26564,
version by The Haven Quartet
"From Dawn to Dusk," All Sons and Daughters,
CCLI #6180641
"Rise," Shawn McDonald, CCLI #5933710
"Give Us Clean Hands," Charlie Hall, CCLI #2060208

Recommended songs to play during imposition of ashes

"Beauty for Ashes," Shane Bernard, Kendall Combes,
CCLI #4461111
"I was there to Hear your Borning Cry," GTG #488,
STF #2051
"Beautiful Things," Lisa and Michael Gungor,
CCLI #5665521
"At the Foot of the Cross," Kathryn Scott, CCLI #4157353
version by Tim and Em
"Holy, Holy, Holy" GTG #552
"Christ has Died; Christ is Risen" GTG #553
"Amen" GTG #554

Gather

Greeting and Announcements

Considerations: Welcome people and take this time to make any announcements. You will want to explain the imposition of ashes for those who may never have experienced it.

Call to Worship

Adapted from Joel 2:1–2, 12–14

Leader: Blow the trumpet in Zion;
sound the alarm on my holy mountain!

**People: Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble,
for the day of the LORD is coming, it is near—**

Leader: a day of darkness and gloom,
a day of clouds and thick darkness!

**People: Yet even now, says the LORD,
return to me with all your heart,
with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning;
rend your hearts and not your clothing.**

Leader: Return to the LORD, your God,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love,
and relents from punishing.

**People: Who knows whether he will not turn and relent,
and leave a blessing behind him,
a grain offering and a drink offering
for the LORD, your God?**

Leader: Return to the Lord! Let us worship God.

Song of Praise

Prayer of Confession

Holy and most beautiful Lord,
We are humbled by your compassion and mercy.
We recognize that within us is much that has hurt and
offended you.
We acknowledge our faithlessness
and admit that we are undeserving of your commitment
to us.

(Silence)

King of kings and Lord of all,
We live among a people of unclean ways.
We avoid those who aren't like us.
We avert our eyes to the sight of those in need
for fear they'll ask us for help.
We perpetuate societal structures
that benefit some but not all.
We don't share,

hoarding our goods,
depriving others.
We create war, refusing to do the hard, uncertain work of
peace.

Even the church excludes,
seeking to do your job of judging others.
In so many ways, we are an unclean people.

(Silence)

But now, empowered by your grace,
given to us through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection,
we seek to renew our commitment
and consciously deepen our relationship with you.
Help us renew our allegiance to your kingdom
and its ways of shalom for all people
through Christ our Lord we pray. Amen.

(Silence)

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Option 1

Amazing God, we thank you for drawing us here together,
to connect with each other, and to connect with you.
We come here full of stress and distractions.
Some of us struggle just to get through the day.
Take these burdens from us, we pray,
and send now your Holy Spirit
to allow us to be present to your Word.
Amen.

Option 2

Creator God,
you have formed us from the dust of the earth,
enlivening us with your Spirit breath.
Send forth your Holy Spirit
to gather up our dusty days and ways
that the face of the earth
may be renewed in you.
Move through us that we may remember this day that we
are the created, and not the Creator.
Move through us that we may acknowledge our sinfulness
and repent.
Move through us that we may face our own mortality with
hope.
We pray all of this in the name of the source of our hope,
Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Scripture

Considerations: One or more of the readings below may be used.

Psalm 103:1–14 (Year 3, Week 27)

Psalm 25:1–10, 16–18 (Year 1, Week 20)

Psalm 51:1–12 (Year 2, Week 14)

Old Testament Reading Isaiah 58:1–12
Joel 2:1–2, 12–17

New Testament Reading Matthew 6:1–6, 16–21
2 Corinthians 5:20b–6:10
(Year 4, Week 7)

Reflection

Considerations: Split into groups of five to seven, depending upon how many are in attendance. Ask them to reflect for 15–20 minutes on the following questions:

- What struck you about this text? Where did you hear God speaking in your life?
- What did you fail to notice?
- Why do you suppose you focused on what you did and not on other things?
- What do you resist in this passage? Why do you suppose that is?
- Who is the Lord asking you to be and what is the Lord asking you to do differently through this passage of Scripture?

Bring the groups back together and allow the groups to share, if willing, what they talked about.

Respond

Considerations: The proper response to the Word on this day is one of repentance.

Invitation to Lenten Discipline

Considerations: The community's leader may offer an invitation to observe a holy Lent by attending more to Scripture, praying, and fasting; examining one's own soul in the light of God's sacrificial love; and serving others with more intentionality. An invitation to a spring mission trip may also help people make the connection between worship service and service to others as worship, an essential discipline of Christian life.

Offering

Considerations: While unusual, this offering reminds us that what we have to offer God often falls short of God's good desires for us. Each person is given one index card. Have people write down one thing that gets in the way of following Christ. For example, we may write that we want to work on our lack of spiritual discipline or our tendency to gossip. On the back of that same card, invite them to reflect upon tangible things they can do/change to clear the way to follow Christ more faithfully. Upon completion, place the cards in the offering "plate" as a symbol of surrendering and giving back to God.

Prayer

O Lord, without you we are but dust.
Through these ashes remind us
of our dependence on you,
and your devotion to us.
May we know the strength of your Spirit as we seek to
follow you;
May we know the discipline of your love as we seek to draw
nearer to you;
May we know the insight of your wisdom as we seek to
learn of you.
As we receive the ashes upon our foreheads,
may we enter into the joy of sharing with you in ministry,
in suffering, in death, and in life.
For your glory and your kingdom's sake. Amen.

Imposition of Ashes

Considerations: On each chair, place a small piece of paper and a writing tool. Invite people to write down areas in their lives where they are broken. As they walk up to receive the imposition of ashes, have them place their paper into a metal container (next to the station of imposition of ashes) large enough to hold a fire safely. As you trace a cross on people's foreheads with ashes, say these words:

"Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return." (Gen. 3:19)

(Music may be played during this time, chosen from the playlist.)

After everyone has received their ashes, have a leader light the papers inside the metal container to symbolize the old dying and the new life taking place through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ our Lord. Please have a fire extinguisher close by in case the fire gets out of control.

Communion

Invitation

Sacraments are embodiments of the good news of God's Word, so you're invited to stop by the font on your way to the table to remember that while we may be dust, we are baptized dust. You are so precious to God that our Lord has been broken so that you might know the wholeness of eternal life. He was baptized with the baptism of death, drinking to the last dregs the cup God placed before him, so that we might know life in all its fullness. This bread of life, this cup of blessing are set before us to nourish us as the body of Christ's blessing for the world. So come, let us join in this foretaste of the meal of God's kingdom, spread out for us as we serve and are served in Christ's name.

Great Prayer of Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is truly right and our greatest joy
to give you thanks and praise, eternal God,
creator and ruler of the universe.
You hold all our days in your hand,
the same hand that spangled stars in the sky
and shaped dust into human form.
You breathed your life into us earthlings,
and set us in your world to love and serve you.
But we reject your love.

Yet you continue to woo us, calling us through prophets
to return to a covenant of love with you.

Therefore, with all of creation, the heavenly angels,
and all saints, we lift our voices in praise:

(singing "Holy, Holy, Holy," GTG #552)

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest, hosanna in the highest.

We praise you that you sent Jesus
to capture us with your love.
Living as one of us, baptized in Holy Spirit,
he taught us your way.
Even as our sin was betraying him,
he sat at table with his disciples
and took bread and blessed it and broke it, saying, This
is my body, which is given for you.
Do this in remembrance of me.
Then he took a cup, and said,
“Take this and divide it among yourselves,
for I will not drink of the fruit of the vine
until the kingdom of God comes.”
We remember your faithfulness unto death, O Lord,
and look with awe upon your tortured love
bleeding accursed upon a tree.
We celebrate Christ’s rising
that released us from bondage to sin.

Following you into the promised dominion of God,
we confidently sing the mystery of faith:

(singing “Christ Has Died; Chris Is Risen” GTG #553)

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

Thank you, for the gift of this table
set as a sign of your kingdom in our midst.

Come now, Holy Spirit, and move among us
that we might perceive your presence and our union
with all the saints of all times and places
as we partake of this covenant meal of your dominion.

We offer ourselves to you as a living sacrifice,
devoted to following you
and praying for the hungry world you call us to serve
even as we pray.

*Considerations: Extemporaneous intercessions for the church,
the world, and those in need are included here.*

We praise you, we bless you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks, most precious Lord,
for the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours
now and forevermore.

(singing “Amen,” GTG #554)

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Breaking the Bread

Is not the bread we break a sharing in the body of Christ?

Lifting the Cup

Is not the cup of blessing which we bless a sharing in the
blood of Christ?

Remembering Our Baptism and Communion of the People

On the approach to the table, ask people to stop at the
font to remember their baptism. Those who imposed ashes
earlier will be there to trace the sign of the cross again on
their forehead with baptismal water. White cloths may be
needed as well to wipe smudges from foreheads. As this is
done, leaders say:

“You may be dust, but in baptism you have been
marked as Christ’s own forever.”

or

For those who’ve not been baptized: “May you walk with
Christ this Lent toward the Kingdom of God.”

*Then communicants proceed to stations to receive communion
by intinction with these words:*

“Remember that Jesus Christ, your Savior, died for you and
the whole world, and be thankful.”

For those who’ve not been baptized, they may receive a blessing:
“Bless, O Lord, this child of your making until such time as
[he/she] becomes a citizen of your kingdom.”

Prayer after Communion

Thank you, gracious God, for the gift of life. Thank you
for Christ and his indwelling Spirit among us. Help us
discipline ourselves to walk in the way of the Lord, that
we might serve all of creation in love, to the glory of God,
Christ, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Bless

Song of Sending

Charge

Option 1

Benediction

May we go from this place
to pursue goodness, wisdom, holiness, and love.
God the Creator, call us to the work of the kingdom,
God the Redeemer, keep us from stumbling,
God the Sustainer, transform and inspire us.
Amen.

Option 2

Celtic Blessing

May the One who walked on wounded feet walk with you
on the road.
May the One who served with wounded hands open your
hands to serve.
May the One who loves with a wounded heart open your
hearts to love.
And may you see the face of Christ in everyone you meet
and may everyone you meet see the face of Christ in
you.

You can find information about Lent and Ash
Wednesday and other resources for Ash Wednesday at
presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/ash-wednesday/.

MAUNDY THURSDAY

Maundy Thursday is the Thursday before Easter Sunday. Services held on this day are rooted in the biblical story of the traditional Jewish Passover meal that takes place right before the betrayal of Jesus. At this meal, also known as the Last Supper, Jesus washes the feet of his disciples. As such, footwashing ceremonies are often part of this service. Both the footwashing ceremony and the Sacrament of Communion invite students to embody and recount this story as part of the Lenten journey of faith.

You might preach a short message in light of the Scripture, or you could weave the Scripture narrative of the evening through the service, starting with a simple Agape meal together, in lieu of communion.

If your group has a meal together, include bread and a pitcher of grape juice on the table. Then break into the story of the Last Supper with the cup and bread being passed at table. At the end someone might read the John 13 passage, as you begin the ritual by kneeling before a preselected group member with a basin and cloth and washing that person's feet. You may wash each student's feet, or empower them to wash one another's feet one by one, pouring fresh water over them and then towel dry.

If you do have both communion and the footwashing ceremony, be sure to connect to the footwashing message, emphasizing the call to serve the world as we've been served at table.

Playlist

"Follow My Feet," The Unlikely Candidates, *Follow My Feet*

"Whose Hands Are These," Neil Diamond, *Home before Dark*

"In the Upper Room," Paul Michael Barry, Enrique Iglesias, Lionel B. Richie, version by the Tennessee Gospel Society

"Love One Another," David Gambrell, pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/theologyandworship/pdfs/res

"Live in Charity (Ubi Caritas)," GTG #205
(recommended music during footwashing ceremony)

"If It Be Your Will," Leonard Cohen, *The Essential Leonard Cohen* (recommended music after the Scripture)

"Fraction Anthem," Mark DiCristina, CCLI #4464008

"Guide My Feet, Lord," GTG #741 (recommended music before the Benediction)

"Jesus Prayer," Shea Cole, *House of St. Michael the Archangel: Hymns*

Gather

Song

Call to Worship

Leader: As Jesus touched the feet of the disciples, he affirmed that nothing in our lives is "untouchable" for God.

People: Footwashing declares that God longs to touch us, cleanse us, heal us, and revive us.

Leader: Through washing one another's feet, we commit ourselves to following the example of Christ, who humbled himself in service to others.

People: By kneeling and washing, we express our need for restoration, and our call to be agents of God's healing and hope in this world.

Song of Praise

Call to Confession

God promises that if we confess our sin, we will be forgiven, and given the grace to forgive. So now, in humility and faith, let us confess our sin to God, first together and then in silence.

Prayer of Confession

God of steadfast love,
When we feel betrayed, we cling to our pain.
Clinging to our pain, we refuse to forgive.
Refusing to forgive, we live in fear.
Living in fear, we fail to serve others.
Forgive us, Lord.
Give us courage to forgive, so we may be free.
Give us hearts that long to serve you and your world.
Through Christ our Lord,
Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Leader: Friends, hear this good news!
Through Christ, we are forgiven.
Through Christ, we are given the grace to forgive.
Through Christ, we are made whole.
Through Christ, we may be at peace.

People: Thanks be to God!

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Holy God, through the power of your Holy Spirit, give us eyes to see and ears to hear what it is you have to say to us through your Word. Amen.

Scripture

John 13:1–17 (*Year 1, Week 17*)

Reflection

Considerations: Betrayal is something most people experience at some point in their lives. Sometimes the sting of betrayal comes from those closest to us. This story is about Jesus choosing to love and serve some of his closest friends, even those who would soon betray him. This reflection could emphasize ways we have both betrayed and felt betrayed by others. The challenge to listeners is the charge to love and serve others, even those who have hurt us. The good news, is that despite the ways we've both betrayed and been betrayed, God's love and grace abounds because of Jesus.

Respond

Song of Offering

Offering

Considerations: One Great Hour of Sharing/Cards committing service in the world.

Foot-Washing Ceremony

Tonight we remember when Jesus, on that night before Passover, took a towel and poured water into a basin, and washed his disciples' feet, saying to them: "If I, your Lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them."

Leader: Loving God, thank you for laying down yourself, and taking the form of a servant.

People: Serving God, thank you for showing us mercy through your vulnerable love.

Leader: Spirit of God, come and wash over us. Make us one in you.

People: God of hope, bind us together in this act of service.

Leader: Come now, Spirit of God, and make us one body in Christ.

People: Bind us together through this act of service, that we may leave this place better able to be your agents of healing and hope. Amen.

Considerations: As you wash one another's feet, say these words: "As I wash your feet this night, remember that Christ came not to be served, but to serve. Amen." It would be helpful to have this phrase up on a screen or printed on a card or in a bulletin.

Communion

Considerations: Be sure to emphasize the Passover/Last Supper during the communion liturgy.

Bless

Sending Prayer

God of service and love,
send us from this place,
nourished by your Word
and drenched in your Spirit.

Give us strength to be your servants,
extending forgiveness to our enemies,
companionship to the lonely,
and justice to the oppressed,
that we may be the hands and feet of the body of Christ,
in the world you created, sustain, and love.
Amen!

Song

Charge

Benediction

Go with courage and compassion to serve God's world,
trusting that the grace, mercy, and peace of the Lord
goes with you now, and forevermore! Amen.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Good Friday is a time to contemplate and remember the suffering, crucifixion, and death of Jesus. This service is often solemn and quiet. In many traditions, the worship space is stripped of Christian symbols or these symbols are covered during this service.

This service is designed to be led by multiple liturgists/readers. Four is a good number, but feel free to choose more or fewer. Parts may be assigned based upon your knowledge of the readers.

Playlist

“Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”

Frederick J. Work, John W. Work, Jr., CCLI #29516

“They Crucified My Lord,” GTG #219, PH #95

“Jesus, Remember Me,” GTG #227, PH #599

“O Sacred Head, Now Wounded,” CCLI # 108303,
version by Glad

“How Deep the Father’s Love for Us,” Stuart Townend,
CCLI #1558110

“Messiah,” Phil Wickham, CCLI #4821768

Gather

(Four candles are lit)

Enter in silence.

Call to Worship

(*Adapted from *Fresh Winds of the Spirit, Book 2: Liturgical Resources for Year A* by Lavon Bayler [Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim Press, 1992], p. 700)

Leader: Come to this place apart to pray; God, who has given us life, meets us here.

People: Will God be revealed to us on this sorrowful day? Has not God turned away and forsaken us?

Leader: Come, all who are weary and discouraged; God, whom you have trusted, has not deserted you.

People: Will God hear our cries and replenish our strength? Who can believe in the midst of such sorrow?

Leader: Come, all who have laid loved ones to rest; God, who grieves with us, watches with us now.

People: Will God’s promise of new life be realized? How shall we know truth, when truth is crucified?

Option 1 Song

Call to Confession

(*Adapted from *Fresh Winds of the Spirit, Book 2: Liturgical Resources for Year A* by Lavon Bayler, pp. 70–71)

Who is it who has heard the cock crow and remembered words of denial and acts of desertion? Who has shouted, “Crucify!”—if not with voice, with deeds that destroy God’s truth? Who has fled, in the face of ridicule or danger, from Christ’s call to discipleship? Listen! God is calling us back. What can we say?

Prayer of Confession

(*Adapted from *Fresh Winds of the Spirit, Book 2: Liturgical Resources for Year A* by Lavon Bayler, pp. 70–71)

Savior of the world, what have you done to deserve this? And what have we done to deserve you? Strung up between criminals, cursed and spat upon, you wait for death, but search for us, for us whose sin has crucified you. To the mystery of undeserved suffering, you bring the deeper mystery of unmerited love. Forgive us for not knowing what we have done. Open our eyes to what we are doing now, as, through wood and nails, you disempower our depravity and transform us by your grace. Amen.

or

O God, we stumble back to your throne of grace. We have wanted to live life on our own terms. We have expected you to favor us and protect us from harm. We have relied on you to hold evil in check, evil that we cause. O God, we confess our half-hearted commitment and broken faithfulness. We are guilty of so much that separates us from the goodness you intend and from the people you have called us to love. Can you forgive us yet another time? Amen.

Option 2 Song

Sing verse one of “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”

O God, how often have we nailed you to the tree? How often have we nailed people down with labels? How often have we judged people without a second glance, and cast them aside like criminals? How often have we imprisoned people with our prejudice? Lord, have mercy.

Sing verse one of “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”

O God, how often have we pierced you in the side? How often have our words pierced the hearts of those we love? How often have we spoken cruel words in quick anger? How often have we stabbed people in the back? How often have we betrayed a friend for our own benefit? Lord, have mercy.

Sing verse one of “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”

O God, how often have we laid you in the tomb? How often have we set you aside, treated you as if you were dead? How often have we neglected our relationship with you? How often have we acted as if what we do doesn't affect you or others? Lord, have mercy.

Sing verse one of “Were You There When They Crucified My Lord?”

Assurance of Forgiveness

Considerations: In traditional Good Friday services, there would not be an Assurance of Forgiveness. You may want to add one, depending on the pastoral needs of your community, or if the gathered community will not be coming back together for Easter Sunday morning.

One has lived among us who bore our sin and sorrow, who even yet heals us and makes us whole. By the mercy and grace of God, we receive, through Christ, eternal salvation. We can trust once more, knowing God will not disappoint us and the purposes of God will prosper through us. This day of crucifixion, remember; not by your own deeds, but by the unfailing mercy of God, you are forgiven.

Affirmation of Faith

(*From *The Study Catechism: Confirmation Version* [Louisville: Witherspoon Press, 2002], Questions 33–34. Used with permission.)

Considerations: While the Affirmation of Faith and Offering typically appear in the “Respond” portion of the worship service, in response to the Word, they have been relocated in this service to allow for a solemn, uninterrupted departure following the Scripture, and tie nicely into the confession.

Leader: What do you affirm when you say that he was “crucified, dead and buried”?

People: From Christ's lonely and terrible death we learn that there is no sorrow he has not known, no grief he has not borne, and no price he was unwilling to pay in order to reconcile us to God.

Leader: What do you affirm when you say that he “descended into hell”?

People: That our Lord took upon himself the full consequences of our sinfulness in order that we might be spared.

Offering

Considerations: In response to the Prayer of Confession/ Affirmation of Faith, and mindful of God's ongoing grace, invite students to take a strip of pre-cut black fabric or ribbon. Instruct them to consider a spiritual practice they might take on during the next three days as they prepare to encounter our resurrected Christ at Easter. (Ideas include daily devotional, service, moments of silence, prayer journaling or drawing.) The strips may be tied around wrists, backpacks, etc. as reminders of God's generosity in the midst of our sin, and our gratitude in light of that generosity. You might consider including a scriptural citation on the ribbon, which ties God's offering to our offering. Possibilities include: Romans 6:23, John 3:16, 1 John 4:10, 1 Corinthians 6:20.

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Into the twisted darkness of this day, straighten us out with the light of your Holy Spirit so we might exalt your glory even in the depths of evil's degradation. This we pray through your Word made flesh in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Scripture

Isaiah 53:1–9

Extinguish candle #1.

Silence.

Drape one of the prominent liturgical items or spaces in black.

Scripture

(*Adapted from *Chalice Worship* [St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999], 126–128; a Disciples of Christ resource.)

Luke 23:32–34 (*Year 3, Week 29*)

Leader: Now two others, both criminals, were led away with Jesus to be crucified. When they came to the place called Skull, they crucified him and the criminals there, one on his right, the other on his left. Then Jesus said:

People: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Silent prayer

Leader: Have mercy on us, O Lord.

People: **Jesus, we believe in you, we hope in you, we love you. Through your cross bring us to the hope of the resurrection.**

Extinguish candle #2.

Silence and Musical Meditation.

Drape another prominent liturgical item or space in black.

Scripture (3 leaders/liturgists)

Luke 23:39–43 (*Year 3, Week 29*)

(*For the purpose of printed bulletins, Leader 1 = Narrator, Leaders 2 and 3 = Criminals.*)

Leader 1: Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying:

Leader 2: “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us.”

Leader 1: The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply:

Leader 3: “Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal.

Leader 1: Then he said,

Leader 3: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

Leader 1: Jesus replied to him,

All: “Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Silent prayer

Leader 1: Have mercy on us, O Lord.

All: **Jesus, we believe in you, we hope in you, we love you. Through your cross you brought us the hope of the resurrection.**

Extinguish candle #3.

Musical Meditation (Taizé)—“Jesus, Remember Me”—
(*drape cross in black*)

Song builds in harmony/parts and in volume throughout the service.

Silence

Considerations: Musical Audio Art with sounds of the old spiritual, “Were You There” in background, hammers hitting metal, sounds of cutting wood, then a gurgle and gasp for air, and then dead silence.

Scripture

Matthew 27:45–46 (*Year 4, Week 29*)

Luke 23:44–46

(Adapted from *Chalice Worship*, pp. 126–128)

Leader: From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. At about three o'clock, Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

People: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

Leader: It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice,

People: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.”

Extinguish candle #4.

Silent prayer

Leader: Have mercy on us, O Lord.

All: **Jesus, we believe in you, we hope in you, we love you. Through your cross you brought us the hope of resurrection.**

Respond

Considerations: If a shorter service is desired, you may choose to omit the Solemn Reproaches and invite worshipers to reflect in silence before continuing with the closing prayer.

Solemn Reproaches of the Cross

Considerations: If you choose not to print or project this piece, the leader may instruct worshipers to respond to the line “You have prepared a cross for your Savior” with the word “Lord, have mercy.”)

Leader: O my people, O my church,
What have I done to you,
or in what have I offended you?
Answer me.
I led you forth from the land of Egypt
and delivered you by the waters of baptism,
but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: I led you through the desert forty years,
and fed you with manna;
I brought you through tribulation and penitence,
and gave you my body, the bread of heaven,
but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: What more could I have done for you
that I have not done?
I planted you, my chosen and fairest vineyard,
I made you the branches of my vine;
but when I was thirsty, you gave me vinegar to
drink
and pierced the side of your Savior with a spear
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: I went before you in a pillar of cloud,
and you have led me to the judgment hall of Pilate.
I scourged your enemies and brought you to a land
of freedom,
but you have scourged, mocked, and beaten me.
I gave you the water of salvation from the rock,
but you have given me gall and left me to thirst,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: I gave you a royal scepter,
and bestowed the keys to the kingdom,
but you have given me a crown of thorns.
I raised you on high with great power,
but you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: My peace I gave, which the world cannot give,
and washed your feet as a sign of my love,
but you draw the sword to strike in my name
and seek high places in my kingdom.
I offered you my body and blood,
but you scatter and deny and abandon me,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: I sent the Spirit of truth to guide you,
and you close your hearts to the counselor.
I pray that all may be one in the Creator and me,
but you continue to quarrel and divide.
I call you to go and bring forth fruit,
but you cast lots for my clothing,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: I grafted you into the tree of my chosen Israel,
and you turned on my people with persecution and
mass murder.
I made you joint heirs with them of my covenants,
but you made them scapegoats for your own guilt,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Leader: I came to you as the least of your brothers and sisters;
I was hungry and you gave me no food,
I was thirsty and you gave me no drink,
I was a stranger and you did not welcome me,
naked and you did not clothe me,
sick and in prison and you did not visit me,
and you have prepared a cross for your Savior.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Closing Prayer

(*Adapted from *Awed to Heaven, Rooted in Earth* by Walter Brueggemann, [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003], pp. 159–160)

Holy God who hovers daily round us in fidelity and compassion, this day we are mindful of the dreaded hovering of death before which we stand thin and needful. On this day of all days, a great threat looms so large and powerful. It is not for nothing that we tremble at these three hours of darkness and the raging earthquake. It is not for nothing . . . so we come in our helpless candor this day . . . remembering, giving thanks, and mourning the death of Jesus on the cross. Our only urging on Friday is that you live this as we must—impacted but not destroyed, dimmed but not quenched. For your great staying power and your promise of newness we praise you. It is in your power and your promise that we take our stand this day. We dare trust that Friday is never the last day, so we watch for the new day of life. Amen.

Depart in Silence

Considerations: Print in the bulletin or project a slide that reads, “Please exit the sanctuary in silence whenever you’re ready.”

You can find other resources at presbyterianmission.org/ministries/worship/good-friday/.

EASTER

This service focuses on the great mystery of the resurrection, which, when we try to deconstruct and analyze it, may be hard to believe. But even those closest to Jesus, who encountered him in bodily resurrection weren't so sure what was happening. Instead of looking for proof, which academic environments condition students to do, Easter allows us to revel in God's miracles and power. This is a time for storytelling and may also be a time to pull out familiar old hymns, sharing in the joy of our connectedness to saints of all time (including those in today's stories), proclaiming resurrection as central to our Christian identity.

Playlist

- "Crag and Clay," Lisa Gungor, Michael Gungor,
CCLI #6189422 (*recommended song after Opening Prayer*)
- "O Worship the King," Robert Grant, Johann Michael
Haydn, GTG #41, PH #476
- "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today," John Walsh, GTG #245,
PH #123
- "Christ Is Risen, Shout Hosanna!" Austin C. Lovelace,
Brian Arthur, Wren, Edith Margaret Gellibrand Reed,
CCLI #1434564
- "Mighty to Save," Ben Fielding, Reuben Morgan,
CCLI #4591782
- "Christ Is Risen," Matt Maher, Mia Fieldes,
CCLI #5242683
- "Oh Happy Day," Ray Charles with the Voices Jubilation
Choir
- "Resurrection," Lenny Kravitz, *Circus*
- "Hero," Bethany Dillon, *So Far: The Acoustic Sessions*,
CCLI #4626444
- "All the Earth Will Sing Your Praises," Paul Baloche,
CCLI #4037057
- "I've Seen Days," Zehnder, *Now*
- "Let There Be," Gungor (*recommended for Gathering music.*
Visit YouTube for inspiration)

Gather

Gathering Music

Call to Worship

Adapted from Psalm 118:14–24 (*Year 4, Week 9*)

Leader: God is our strength, our song, our salvation.

**People: And so we sing, we shout, we share stories of
might and mercy,**

Leader: that God did not let death lay its hands on us.

**People: And so we pray, we praise, "Hosanna!
Hosanna!"**

Leader: The stone that the builders tossed aside has now
become the most important stone. The Lord has
done this, and we marvel.

**People: And so this day belongs to the Lord! Let us
celebrate!**

Consideration: We may take for granted that students
(and nonstudents) know what "Hosanna" means, but it
may be helpful to offer an explanation as Easter services
are frequently filled with them. Hosannah is an express of
adoration or praise.

Opening Prayer

Resurrecting God, we sing to the earth a new song: one of
new life, one of new beginnings, one of new creation. The
stone has been rolled away, leaving bare our perceptions of
what is possible and impossible. As it turns out, nothing
is impossible for you! Descend upon us, O God, as we
worship you this day, that we might ascend to new heights
and proclaim from on high the great and wonderful news:
Death no longer has the last word! The world has been
turned upside down! The lives of your people have been
changed forever! And a new message rises: Christ is risen!
Alleluia! Amen.

Song

Call to Confession

God says to us, "Do not be afraid! The tomb is empty! Go
and tell others what you have seen." But, all too often, our
voices are rendered silent, our amazement turns to apathy,
and fear slows us to a halt. Through confession, though,
God liberates our minds and hearts to preach the gospel of
resurrection. Let us confess, then, that our minds and hearts
might be freed. Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

Leader: We discover the stone rolled away. We see the tomb is empty. We hear that you are risen.

People: But we do not believe.

Leader: We race to tell the story. We walk and you stand beside us. Our eyes are opened.

People: But we do not believe.

Leader: We hear you explain it all to us. We break bread with you. We are blessed.

People: But we do not believe. O Lord, help our unbelief!

Leader: Forgive our stubbornness. Forgive our emptiness. Forgive our faithlessness.

People: Help our unbelief!

Leader: Open our mouths to speak. Open our ears to listen. Open our minds to comprehend.

People: Help our unbelief!

Leader: Empower us to preach. Enable us to practice. Call upon us to serve.

People: Help our unbelief! The grave is silent. A new creation has taken hold. Thanks be to God! Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Leader: Do not be afraid! The tomb is empty! Anyone in Christ is born anew!

People: We are forgiven, and new life has begun! Amen!

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

By your Spirit, O God, roll away any stones blocking our understanding and let light shine in upon us, that we may understand the transformative power of the gospel. Amen.

Scripture

Luke 24:1–12 (*Year 3, Week 30*)

Luke 24:13–35 (*Year 3, Week 30*)

Luke 24:36–43

Song

Considerations: Luke 24 offers three post-resurrection stories. You might break up the passage, singing a song or verse of a song between segments, in a lessons-and-carols style. You might also consider offering reflections following each segment of Scripture. If you are pressed for time, each Scripture reading will also stand on its own. The Easter story is filled with drama, mystery, and beautiful imagery. The text may be read without a separate reflection.

Reflection

Considerations: In the world of academics, where things must stand to reason, preaching resurrection may be no easy feat. In many ways, college students may not be so different than the characters in the story: the women rendered speechless when asked why they're looking for the living among the dead (as if that was what they had intended to do when going to preserve the body); the followers who walked seven miles from Jerusalem to Emmaus with Jesus and only recognize him when he breaks the bread; the disciples seeking some rational explanation for why Jesus was in their midst.

You might offer silence following each passage with a question to prompt reflection, offer one cohesive sermon, or invite students to reflect for a few minutes following each passage.

Questions to consider include:

- Where, now, are the places that we go to look for life among the dead?
- The women consider the promise of resurrection an “idle tale,” the journeyers to Emmaus do not recognize Jesus (even after having heard he was alive), and the disciples think they've seen a ghost. How do we explain away or water down the miracle of the resurrection?
- Where or when in your own life have you recognized the presence of God after the fact?
- How might we reclaim the sheer mystery and power of the resurrection two thousand years after it happened? How might embracing the Easter story in all the confusion, fear, and wonder of that first resurrection day reshape our lives and our faith?

Respond

Lord's Prayer

Affirmation of Faith

Option 1

Leader: Christ is risen!

People: Christ is risen indeed!

Option 2

(Declaration of Faith, 10.3)

In the death of Jesus Christ
God's way in the world seemed finally defeated.
But death was no match for God.
The resurrection of Jesus was God's victory over death.
Death often seems to prove that life is not worth living,
that our best efforts and deepest affections go for nothing.
We do not yet see the end of death.
But Christ has been raised from the dead,
transformed and yet the same person.
In his resurrection is the promise of ours.
We are convinced that the life God wills for each of us
is stronger than the death that destroys us.
The glory of that life exceeds our imagination
but we know we shall be with Christ.
So we treat death as a broken power.
Its ultimate defeat is certain.
In the face of death we grieve.
Yet in hope we celebrate life.
No life ends so tragically
that its meaning and value are destroyed.
Nothing, not even death, can separate us
from the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayers of the People

God of light, and mystery, and surprise, and life . . .

We are the women who go to the empty tomb. We mourn the loss of loved ones. We do what we can to keep things moving, because the pain is too fresh, too real for us to bear. So we go on with our day-in-day-out lives to keep things "normal." But really, deep down, we're in shambles. We don't know what to do. We don't know where to turn. We don't know what to make of our lives. We are the women who go to the empty tomb.

We are Peter fresh from the denial. If we could go back and change things, we would. If we could have another

chance, we'd take it. We spend our lives living in regret for what we've done. We wallow in the guilt and where it has left us: stewing, venting, grieving. We are Peter fresh from the denial.

We are those on the walk to Emmaus. We don't recognize Jesus in our midst, even when he stands there and speaks directly to us. Instead, we question, we doubt, we wander. We even pretend to know who Jesus is, though our explanations are by no means complete. We're just left walking the road, thinking we know where it'll take us, when really we're lost.

We're all of these people, who deep down want only to follow you—to the point that we'll bow our faces to the ground in your presence; we'll run as fast as we can to see if the tomb really is empty; we'll let our hearts burn within us if only our eyes will be opened to you.

We're all of these people who long to be yours. So claim us; redeem us; forgive us; save us! Amen.

Offering

Considerations: Ahead of time, prepare a small wooden cross covered in chicken wire. Invite students to bring flowers to the service, and have extras on hand (or make tissue flowers).

Acknowledge that the resurrection may be hard to believe, because there are places in the world where death seems to have the last word. Ask all to name or reflect on those places.

Say something to this effect: We have offered examples of much ugliness. And there is tremendous brokenness, heartache, and ugliness in our world. But we worship a God who overpowered death to emerge alive from a tomb. Just as the resurrection transformed the cross from an instrument of death into a symbol of life, that power can transform the ugliest, most broken parts of our world into places of beauty. Christ has overcome death and come to us so that we might believe, even in the midst of our doubt. Our offering this morning is to bring what little faith we have, no matter how cut off, in the form of flowers. Together, may we offer up our handfuls of faith and our transformation of the cross in gratitude to God.

Song

Communion

Invitation

(*From *Book of Common Worship*, ©1993. Westminster John Knox Press. www.wjkbooks.com. Used with permission.)

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God!
They will come from east and west,
and from north and south,
and sit at table in the kingdom of God.

According to Luke,
when our risen Lord was at table with his disciples,
he took the bread, and blessed and broke it,
and gave it to them.
Then their eyes were opened
and they recognized him.

This is the Lord's table.
Our Savior invites those who trust him
to share the feast which he has prepared.

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

Prayer After Communion

Considerations: Thank God for the gift of Godself in Christ and his meal. Intercede for all the broken places of death in the world mentioned earlier at the cross and ask God to send us forth, full of the faith, hope, and power of the Holy Spirit to be agents of reconciliation.

Bless

Song of Sending

Charge

Benediction

(Adapted from Hebrews 13:20–21)

Now may the God of peace, who brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Leader: Christ is risen!

People: Christ is risen indeed!

FINAL EXAMS

For some students, going to worship during times of exams is a welcomed break from the stress and hectic pace of studying. Others may resist worship because of the need to spend time studying. This service can be a much-needed refuge. You may want to open with a moment of silence or centering music or provide space within the service for students to experience uncluttered stillness.

Playlist

“Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing,” John Wyeth, Robert Robinson, CCLI #108389, version by Chelsea Moon and Uncle Daddy, *Hymn Project, Vol. 1*

“Earth and All Stars!” GTG #26, PH #458

“Trust,” Jason Ingram, Matt Hammitt, CCLI #5989939

“Prayer,” Leela James, *A Change Is Gonna Come*

“From the Inside Out,” Joel Houston, CCLI #4705176

“All I Need Is You,” Marty Sampson, CCLI #4455213, version by Adie (Adrienne Camp), *Just You and Me*

“Oh How I Need You,” David Leonard, Leslie Jordan, Paul Mabury, Stuart Garrard, CCLI #6369101

“Steady My Heart,” Ben Glover, Kari Jobe, Matt Bronleewe, CCLI #6183071

Gather

Call to Worship

Adapted from Philippians 4:4–7 (*Year 4, Week 6*)

Leader: Rejoice in the Lord always! Again, I will say,
Rejoice.

People: The Lord is near! Do not worry about anything.

Leader: Do not worry about anything, but let everything be known to God.

People: The peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Leader: Let us worship God!

Song of Praise

Opening Prayer

Lord, remind us that during these stressful times, there is more to life than educational success. Remind us that regardless of our accomplishments, you will always love us. We pray that our attitudes this week will not be a result of the forthcoming exams but rather a result of us knowing

that you will love us through anything. Help us to set aside this important time of worship. Calm us. We take refuge in you. Amen.

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

Psalm 46 (*Year 2, Week 9*)

Considerations: You may read the passage of Scripture, or consider showing this video, sermonspice.com/product/150420/psalm-46-%E2%80%94ctw

Song

Scripture

Hebrews 12:11–15 (*Year 4, Week 18*)

Reflection

Considerations: The passages for today offer words of comfort, perspective, and peace in God’s activity in the world and in us. Keeping in mind that students may be carrying a lot of stress, you may consider a time of quiet reflection in the form of *lectio divina*. The Responding Activity also may work well here.

Witness/Story of Hope

Considerations: Replace the reflection with a testimonial. This is an opportunity to have one or more older students or recent graduates who have some perspective on and proximity to student life share with the group about their faith in relation to the stresses of being a student.

Respond

Song

Responding Activity

On a wall or back table, place three large pieces of butcher paper or newsprint.

Provide colored pencils, markers, and/or watercolors.

Invite the students to write or illustrate according to the topic on the paper.

-
- On page 1 write across the top: What I Fear . . .
 - On page 2 write across the top: Refuge Is . . .
 - On page 3 write across the top: Being Still Is . . .

Prayers of the People

God of Creation, truly you are our refuge and strength. It is through your goodness alone that we have the leisure to set aside the time to study and explore the wonders of your creation.

As we study, we give to you our stresses and our concerns.

We are stressed about tests and papers, but we are also concerned about the people in our world who are suffering. We are stressed about grades, but we are also concerned about caring for your creation. We are stressed about jobs and internships, but we are also concerned about those who are lonely, sick, and impoverished.

Hear our silent prayers for all that stresses and concerns us . . .

(Pause for silent prayer)

Lord God, we give this week to you.
Do not let us worry. Do not let us fear.
Be with us in every situation, we pray.
Allow us to understand that what we desire may not be
what comes;
And help us to know that whatever happens, we have you,
the refuge and strength of our lives.
We love you. Amen.

Offering

Considerations: Recommend taking an offering for an educational organization that helps those who do not have the opportunities or the leisure to study in the ways that the gathered students do.

Bless

Song of Sending

Considerations: If the worshipping community is a smaller group, then invite them to stand in a circle holding hands. If they are a large group, then invite them to hold hands in their rows. Have them all breathe in and breathe out together, in unison, a few times before giving the charge and benediction.

Charge

Adapted from Hebrews 12:12–13 (*Year 4, Week 18*)

As you go from this place, lift your drooping hands and strengthen your weak knees. Rely on God and help each other. Make straight paths for your feet, so that your faltering will be healed.

Benediction

GRADUATION/ SENDING

This service is best used for occasions when a group of people in the community will be ending their time with that community. Typically, this means graduation, which often occurs in December or April/May. In December, this probably means that this service overlaps with Advent. In April/May, this might mean that this service is close to Easter or Pentecost. Attention should be given to the liturgical calendar, while also honoring the intent of this service.

Playlist

“Guide My Feet,” GTG #741, PH #354

“Hold to God’s Unchanging Hand,” Franklin Lycurgus Eiland, Jennie Wilson, CCLI #107548, version by the Sensational Nightingales

“Be Still, My Soul,” GTG #819, version by BYU Vocal Point

“I, the Lord of Sea and Sky,” GTG #69, PH #525

“Take My Life,” Chris Tomlin, Frances Ridley Havergal, Henri, Abraham Cesar Malan, Louie Giglio, CCLI #4162843

“Will You Come and Follow Me (The Summons),” GTG #726, PH #2130, CCLI #4983527

“Use Me,” Dewitt Jones, CCLI #1271167, version by the Motor City Mass Choir

“The Pretty and the Plain,” JJ Heller, *The Pretty and the Plain*

“Safe,” Phil Wickham, Timothy Palmer, CCLI #5653241

Gather

Call to Worship

Based on Matthew 10 (*Year 4, Week 12*)

Leader: Jesus sent forth the twelve into the world.

People: As God’s people, we are sent forth into the world.

Leader: Jesus gave authority and power to those whom he sent.

People: As God’s people, we have authority and power as we go.

Leader: Jesus instructed them to proclaim that the kingdom is near.

People: As God’s people, we proclaim the kingdom of heaven has come near.

Leader: Let us worship God.

Song of Praise

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

God of our journeys, as we consider endings, transitions, and new beginnings, we confess our sins before you and each other. We struggle with regrets from the past. We struggle with anxiety over what lies ahead. We struggle to be in one place while looking toward another place.

Guide us in this journey, O God, and forgive us. Move us to give thanks for our past relationships and experiences. Move us to trust in your care for what is to come. Move us to a more full appreciation of the places where we find ourselves this day. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Passing the Peace

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Scripture

(Use one scripture.)

1 Kings 19:1–8 (*Year 1, Week 25*)

Jeremiah 29:2–12 (*Year 2, Week 21*)

Song

Scripture

(Use one scripture.)

Colossians 4:7–18

Matthew 10:5–14 (*Year 4, Week 12*)

Reflection

Considerations: As students conclude their time in your community of faith, you may want to draw upon examples from Scripture of being sent on a journey, being apart from a community, and the difficulties that come with these transitions. In 1 Kings 19:1–8, Elijah is on a journey and God provides for him. In Jeremiah 29:2–12, there is the admonition to seek the welfare of the place where you are (or in the case of graduates, the place where they will be. Coincidentally, this Scripture is also used in the First Week service, which may provide a nice bookend to the year.) In Colossians 4:7–18, two communities of faith who are separated by many miles are linked by Epaphras, who prays for his former community while in a new community. In Matthew 10:5–14, Jesus sends the twelve with instructions.

Respond

Affirmation of Faith

(from *A Declaration of Faith*, 9.1)

In forming his people and sending them into the world
Jesus called individuals to be disciples.
They were to share the joy of his companionship,
to understand and obey his teachings,
and to follow him in life and death.
We confess that Christians today are called to discipleship.
Life shared with Christ and shaped by Christ
is God's undeserved gift to each of us.
It is also God's demand upon every one of us,
never perfectly fulfilled by any of us.
Forgiven by God and supported by brothers and sisters,
we strive to become more faithful and effective
in our daily practice of the Christian life.

Prayers of the People (and for the Graduates)

Offering

Considerations: Worshipers write a promise for a way they will dedicate their lives to God through an act of service as they are sent from this place. Seniors may make a special attempt to tie their offering to their sense of vocation, using their time of study to prepare them to serve God in their work and leisure. In the weeks leading up to this service, you might work with seniors to establish a corporate offering which may be offered back to the group to further the ministry, to an organization your ministry supports, or in some other way.

Recognitions

Considerations: During this time, it is appropriate to recognize those who will be graduating soon as well as student leaders who have served over the past semester, quarter, or year. You may want to present a gift or some token of appreciation. It would be good to hand each student an envelope with a list of places of worship in the areas to which they will be going. This will help emphasize that they are being sent from one community of faith to another, rather than just leaving. Depending on your context, it might even be good to have students speak about what the ministry has meant to them.

Song

Communion

Invitation to the Table

Even on the night he was arrested and carted off towards the cross, Jesus knew that we would need reminders of his presence among us. And in those precious minutes, he offered his followers the gift of this holy meal, saying, "Remember me." Hardly any time after that, the disciples too were scattered and tested and questioned and challenged.

Through the workings of the Holy Spirit, Christ is present with us now, beckoning us to this table, where in the sight of wine poured and the scent of fresh bread we glimpse signs of God's invisible grace. And as we are scattered, we remember our God who fills us up with sustaining bread and God's own Spirit to live as Christ's disciples wherever our feet may carry us.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Words of Institution

Prayer after Communion

Sustaining God who fills us up and sends us out, we give you thanks for this holy meal. Thank you for gathering us at this table, a community to love and sustain one another. Holy Spirit, we thank you for the way you gather us up into the presence of the great cloud of witnesses who have gone before us, modeling the faith and showing us the way. Loving Christ, we thank you for this holy reminder that you are with us, at this table and wherever we are scattered after this meal. May this bread and cup energize us to serve you. As we have been filled up, send us out. Amen.

Bless

Litany of Sending

Leader: As you go from this place, remember us and we will remember you.

People: As you go from this place, pray for us and we will pray for you.

Graduates: As we go from this place, we take many memories, and we long for your prayers.

Leader: We send you from this place to be the body of Christ in this world.

People: We send you from this place to be the church wherever you go.

Graduates: We are a sent people, participating in the mission of God in all that we do.

All: Amen.

Song

Charge

(adapted from A Brief Statement of Faith)

In gratitude to God empowered by the Spirit,
go out into the world

striving to serve Christ in our daily tasks,
daring to live holy and joyful lives,
eyes open for glimpses of God's new heaven and new
earth,
praying, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

Surrounded by the witness of believers in every time and
place,

may you rejoice, beautiful children,
that no matter where this wild world takes you,
nothing in life or death can ever separate us from the
love of God
in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Benediction

OCCASIONAL SERVICES: SERVICE AND MISSION

DAYS OF SERVICE

These services are either morning or evening worship services led while on a mission trip. To this end, they are brief and oriented toward a smaller group of people. We have listed below multiple psalms and other Scripture passages appropriate for a brief meditation or silent personal reflection and journaling. The psalms have been linked topically to different situations. The psalms can be used either as opening sentences or as passages for meditation. We have also provided several different options for each portion of the service. You can either keep the same format and music while switching out the Scripture passages each day, or have each day be a different mix of the music, prayer, meditation, and Scripture. Each way of ordering the service has its benefits.

Finally, it would be good to consider what purpose a morning or evening worship service might have. Do you want to pump people up for a long day? Or would you rather wind them down toward reflection? Is the purpose to prepare spiritually or to relax after work? Different music, meditation methods, and space settings will impact the tone of your worship. Try dimming lights and lighting candles for an evening service. Bring mats or small carpet squares to sit on the floor together in humility. Consider doing one of the community art projects listed in the Encounter section. This can create a space for worship as the trip progresses.

Playlist

“All the Poor and Powerless,” All Sons and Daughters,
CCLI #5881130

“Take, O Take Me as I Am,” GTG #698, #215 in *Sing, A New Creation*

“I Love the Lord,” GTG #799, PH #362

“You Did Not Have a Home,” Rich Mullins,
CCLI #2593270, version by Bethany Dillon

“If I Can Help Somebody,” version by Eric Simmons,
Freedom

“Send Us Out,” John Michael Talbot, CCLI #12729

“Thuma Mina (Send me, Lord),” GTG #746, #280 in
Sing, A New Creation

“I Will Follow,” Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram,
Reuben Morgan, CCLI #5806878

“You Said,” Reuben Morgan, CCLI #2582810

“God of this City,” Aaron Boyd, Andrew McCann,
Ian Jordan, Peter Comfort, Peter Kernoghan,
Richard Bleakley, CCLI #5037070

“Little Things,” JJ Heller, *The Pretty and the Plain*

Gather

Considerations: Choose one of the Psalm readings below as an opening prayer. Consider having different people from the group act as “liturgists” for the morning.

Psalm

Illness, disease:

13 (*Year 1, Week 9*)

30:1–12 (*Year 1, Week 25*)

71:17–21 (*Year 3, Week 1*)

102:1–7, 18–22; 116 (*Year 3, Week 26*)

God, the hope of the needy:

9:1–2, 7–10, 18 (*Year 1, Week 7*)

10:1–2, 10–14

113 (*Year 4, Week 5*)

121 (*Year 4, Week 12*)

145:13b–21 (*Year 4, Week 25*)

146 (*Year 4, Week 26*)

Waiting on the Lord:

27:1, 4–11a, 13–14 (*Year 1, Week 22*)

33:1–5, 18–22 (*Year 1, Week 28*)

130 (*Year 4, Week 17*)

Natural disasters:

77 (*Year 3, Week 6*)

91:1–6 (*Year 3, Week 17*)

104:24–30 (*Year 3, Week 28*)

Hunger, homelessness:

34:1–10 (*Year 1, Week 29*)

63:1–8 (*Year 2, Week 23*)

68:4–6 (*Year 2, Week 28*)

107:1–9 (*Year 3, Week 30*)

146:5–7 (*Year 4, Week 26*)

War, refugees:

91:16 (*Year 3, Week 17*)

107:1–9 (*Year 3, Week 30*)

Prison ministry:

107:10–16 (*Year 3, Week 30*)

146:5–10 (*Year 4, Week 26*)

Justice and righteousness:

15 (*Year 1, Week 10*)

112:1–9 (*Year 4, Week 4*)

Song of Gratitude

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

God, through the power of your Holy Spirit, give us ears to hear, hearts to embrace, and minds to understand your word, that we may leave this place ready to serve and love your world. Amen.

Scripture

Matthew 5:13–16

Matthew 25:31–40 (*Year 4, Week 27*)

Micah 6:8 (*Year 3, Week 8*)

Luke 6:20–36 (*Year 3, Week 8*)

Luke 10:25–37 (*Year 3, Week 13*)

Amos 5:21–24 (*Year 3, Week 2*)

Deuteronomy 15:1–11

Isaiah 55:1–13

Reflection

1. Spend time in silence, pondering the passage of Scripture.
2. Spend 5–10 minutes writing or drawing what comes to mind when hearing the passage. Perhaps have people keep journals throughout the week.
3. Community Art Project 1: Write or draw thoughts in response to the passage on a giant piece of newsprint. Have this taped to the wall in your worship space as a reminder throughout the week. People can keep adding to it.
4. Community Art Project 2: Have 4x4 squares of paper with markers, crayons, or colored pencils, on a table. People can feel free to write or draw responses to the scriptural passage. These can then be hung up with clothespins on rope strung between two 3M hooks.

Respond

Song

Prayer

Considerations: Challenge participants to say a prayer each day. Each day it will give new and different meaning. Eventually, it may become a prayer from the heart, instead of a prayer just spoken aloud.

Song

Bless

Charge

(*From *Book of Common Worship*, ©1993. Westminster John Knox Press. www.wjkbooks.com. Used with permission.)

Option 1

Have everyone stand in a circle facing in. Have everyone cross their arms, right arm over left arm. Then have everyone hold hands, with their arms crossed. Then, either the liturgist can say to everyone or everyone can say to each other:

Go out into the world in peace;
have courage;
hold on to what is good;
return no one evil for evil;
strengthen the fainthearted;
support the weak, and help the suffering;
honor all people; love and serve the Lord,
rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen!

Once this has been said, have everyone turn to the right, still holding hands, stepping underneath their right arms, until they are facing outward.

Option 2

As God's beloved child, go from this place to love and serve God's world.

Option 3

God has given you peace,
now go and share God's peace!
God has sustained you with hope,
now go and share God's hope!
God has granted you freedom,
now go and share God's freedom!
God has called you to serve,
now go, and serve with joy!

Benediction

May the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit guide, protect, challenge, and inspire you this day and every day!

COMMISSIONING SERVICE

Maybe your campus ministry is considering a mission trip at some point. Perhaps you're thinking of going somewhere over Christmas break or spring break or maybe just after the school year is over in May. If this is something on your radar, consider having a commissioning service to send you and your students out into the world. This can take place within a congregation or in one of your weekly gatherings or at worship with your board.

Playlist

"Siyahamba (We Are Marching)," GTG #853, STF #2235, CCLI #320947

"Let Justice Roll Down," Douglas Romanow

"Guide My Feet," Wendell Whalum

"Send Me Out," CCLI #5621778, Steve Fee

"I Will Follow," Chris Tomlin, Jason Ingram, Reuben Morgan, CCLI #5806878

"All Creatures of Our God and King," Brent Milligan, David Crowder, St. Francis of Assisi, William Henry Draper, CCLI #3608102

"King of the Broken," Andy Park, Chris Tomlin, Darlene Zschech, Graham Kendrick, Israel Houghton, Martin Smith, Matt Redman, Michael W. Smith, Paul Baloche, Steven Curtis Chapman, Stuart Garrard, Tim Hughes, CCLI #5272897

"Carry Your Love," Caedman's Call, *In the Company of Angels: A Call to Worship*

"Instrument for You," The Vespers, *The Fourth Wall*

Gather

Considerations: As people gather for worship, have pictures present from previous mission trips or of the place your group is going. You could have them displayed on a slideshow or as a bulletin insert or cover.

Call to Worship

Option 1

Psalm 67:2–5 (*Year 2, Week 27*)

Leader: May your way be known upon the earth, O Lord.

People: Your saving power among all the nations.

Leader: Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

People: Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!

Leader: For you judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon the earth.

People: Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you.

Option 2

Leader: Why are we gathered here?

People: To give thanks to and worship a Living God.

Leader: How do we respond to this Living God?

People: By loving and serving God and neighbor.

Leader: What is our only comfort in life and death?

People: In life and in death, we belong to God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Leader: When do we know that we are serving God?

People: When all are fed, clothed, visited, cared for, given shelter, and loved.

Leader: Let us worship God!

Prayer

Sending God, your story is one we are called to tell throughout all the earth. Yours is a story that encounters, empowers, unites, and sings! We worship you with gladness. We proclaim your name throughout all the lands! Draw near to us as we follow your call. We are your servants. Hear us when we say, "Here we are, Lord. Send us!" Amen.

Song of Praise

Call to Confession

The Lord calls to each one of us, telling us to go, listen, speak, and serve. Yet there are times when we can't get out of our own way. Still, when we confess our stumblings, God picks us up and ushers us forward. So, let us name how we've fallen, that God might help us up and out into the world. Let us pray.

Prayer of Confession

Liberating God, you tell us to go and serve the least of these: to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, mend the brokenhearted. Instead of heeding your call, we focus only on ourselves. We think of what's best for us. We look for ways to get ahead. We ignore those in need, even when they stand right in front of us. Forgive our selfish ways, God. Show us what it means to love others. Teach us how to serve others. Help us to share your story of amazing grace and abundant mercy. Give us your words to speak and ears to listen. Open our minds and hearts to understand. Guide our feet, Lord, that we might follow in the footsteps of the one true servant, Jesus Christ, our Lord, through whom we pray. Amen.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Leader: Brothers and sisters in Christ, believe the good news of the gospel.

People: Through Jesus Christ, we are forgiven. Alleluia! Amen.

Song of Gratitude

Passing of the Peace

John 14:27 (*Year 1, Week 19*)

Leader: Jesus says, “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.” May the peace of Christ who sends us into the world be with you all.

People: And also with you.

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

By your Spirit, open our eyes, ears, minds, and hearts as we receive your Word, O Lord, that we might speak of its power and tell its wonderful story to all of the world. Amen.

Scripture

Option 1

Luke 5:27–32

Considerations: “The Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to Jesus’ disciples, saying, ‘Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?’” College students, in some ways, are like Pharisees: they’re always asking questions. Why do this? Why do that? It’s what happens when you’re in school and everything you know and believe is put underneath a microscope. When it comes to a mission trip, though, there may be no more appropriate question than “Why do this?” Why go somewhere different and uncomfortable? Why go to a place where you don’t know the language? Why spend your days serving others when you could be doing something more “fun” or “relaxing”? College students may come up with all kinds of responses to these questions, but perhaps what it all boils down to is simply, “Because Jesus did it, and we choose to follow him.” It doesn’t seem to matter who we are or where we come from (after all, Jesus did call “scum” like tax collectors!); it just matters that Jesus calls us to love, serve, and go out there without prejudice or precondition.

Option 2

Luke 14:7–14 (*Year 3, Week 18*)

Considerations: This story involves way more than table etiquette from Jesus. This story involves God’s people and how we’re to treat them. How would this story look if one plugged in cliques and the outsider groups on a college campus into this story? Who would Jesus invite to the banquet? Who are college students inviting to eat with them at their tables? What’s the difference? Who is Christ calling us to serve on our campus and beyond? How are we going to invite them? How are we going to share God’s story with them?

Respond

Moment for Silent Reflection

Affirmation of Faith

(taken from A Brief Statement of Faith)

We trust in Jesus Christ,
fully human, fully God.
Jesus proclaimed the reign of God:
preaching good news to the poor
and release to the captives,
teaching by word and deed
and blessing the children,
healing the sick
and binding up the brokenhearted,
eating with outcasts,
forgiving sinners,
and calling all to repent and believe the gospel.
Unjustly condemned for blasphemy and sedition,
Jesus was crucified,
suffering the depths of human pain
and giving his life for the sins of the world.
God raised Jesus from the dead,
vindicating his sinless life,
breaking the power of sin and evil,
delivering us from death to life eternal.

Commissioning

We are called by God to be the church of Jesus Christ, a sign in the world today of what God intends for all humankind.

The great ends of the church are:
the proclamation of the gospel for the
salvation of humankind;

the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of
the children of God;
the maintenance of divine worship;
the preservation of the truth;
the promotion of social righteousness;
and the exhibition of the Kingdom of Heaven
to the world.

The call of Christ is to willing, dedicated discipleship. Our discipleship is a manifestation of the new life we enter through baptism. Discipleship is both a gift and a commitment, an offering and a responsibility.

[*Names of participants*], the grace bestowed upon you in your baptism is sufficient for your calling because it is *God's grace*. By God's grace we are saved and enabled to grow in the faith and to commit our lives in ways that serve Christ.

God has called each of you [*week/dates you're going*] to particular service through the [*name of place you're going*]. Show your purpose by answering these questions:

Who is your Lord and Savior? **Jesus Christ.**

Will you be Christ's faithful disciple, obeying his Word and showing his love? **I will.**

Will you serve in [*name of place you're going*] with energy, intelligence, imagination, and love, relying on God's mercy and rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit? **I will.**

Do you promise to accept the people you are called to serve right where they are, just the way they are? **We do.**

(*to the congregation*)

Do you, [*name of community of faith*] confirm the call of God to our brothers and sisters in the service of Jesus Christ? **We do.**

Will you support and encourage and pray for them this week in their ministry? **We will.**

Considerations: You may choose to do the Affirmation of Faith at this point in the commissioning.

Let us pray:

Faithful God, in baptism you claimed us; and by your Holy Spirit you are working in our lives, empowering us to live a life worthy of our calling. We thank you for leading these faithful servants to this time and place. Establish them in your truth, guide them by your Holy Spirit, that in your service they may grow in faith, in hope, and in love as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

Commissioning Charge

Friends, you are commissioned to service as volunteers in [*name of place you're going*]. Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God through him.

May the God of peace make you holy in every way, and keep your whole being, spirit, soul, and body, free from every fault at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Bless

Song

Charge/Prayer/Blessing

Hear these words from Teresa of Avila:

Christ has no body but yours,
no hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world,
yours are the feet with which he walks to do good,
yours are the hands with which he blesses all the world.
Yours are the hands, yours are the feet,
yours are the eyes, you are his body.
Christ has no body now but yours,
no hands, no feet on earth but yours,
Yours are the eyes with which he looks
compassion on this world.
Christ has no body now on earth but yours.
[“Christ Has No Body” by Teresa of Avila]

Let us pray. Help us to be your body, Lord Jesus, in a world that so desperately needs to know of your love, grace, and peace. And help us to share your story of love with all whom we meet and serve. In your name, we pray. Amen.

Benediction

May the love of God, the grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the friendship and fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all forevermore—world without end. Amen.

FINAL NIGHT OF A MISSION TRIP

Imagine yourself at the end of a long, but fulfilling week. You're gathered together with your group. Perhaps you've invited those with whom you've been working. This is a time for stories. This is a time for simplicity. A complete worship liturgy is provided, but feel free to pick and choose to pare down the focus on reflection and transition if needed.

This is a time for deep celebration, gratitude, and goodbyes—a complex mixture of exhaustion, elation, joy, sadness, togetherness, and gratitude. If you are having a final dinner together in a larger space, you might stay around tables as you worship. If not, and the worship space is flexible, consider shaping chairs into concentric half circles, so you can see each other as you worship together. The space should be bright, full of light and celebration. One of the purposes of this time is to consider each other as servants of Jesus Christ and as friends. Jesus has flipped the dynamic of master-servant. We are now all servants and friends. This carries into all of our relationships, and especially relationships of service and mission. We are one in the Lord, working together. The texts and songs chosen for this service of worship reflect our mutual servitude and friendship.

Playlist

"Amazing Grace," GTG #649, PH #280

"Come, All You Servants of the Lord," Eelco Vos, PH 242, *Psalms for All Seasons: A Complete Psalter for Worship*, #134A (Recommend singing verse 1 at the beginning of service. Sing the second verse at the end of the service, as a bookend. The first verse is very much a "gathering" verse, the second a "scattering" verse.)

"They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love," Peter Scholtes, CCLI #26997

"Mission's Flame," Matt Redman, CCLI #4328656

"Hearts of Servants," Shane Barnard, CCLI #4461197

"Hands," Jewel, *Spirit*

"One Pure and Holy Passion," Mark Altrogge, CCLI #270224

"Take to the World," Aaron Tate, CCLI #3957949, version by Derek Webb, *She Must and Shall Go Free*

"Lord, Be Glorified," Bob Kilpatrick, CCLI #26368, (Recommend creating your own verses; for example, "In my life," "In our song," "On the streets," or "In the world.")

"Go Now in Peace," Natalie Sleeth (Recommend as a closing song)

Gather

Gathering Music

Opening Words

We gather tonight on the threshold. We are here. We have learned and taught, changed and been changed, loved, maybe cried. There have been moments of exhaustion, confusion, and revelation. We are not the same people we were when we arrived. And yet, it's time to pack our bags, time for reentry into the commitments and communities that will soon welcome us back. Tonight, let us celebrate and reflect, but may this service also mark our promise not to leave our gracious service in this place, but to return with renewed vigor for loving bigger and with the stories of this time on our lips.

Call to Worship

From Micah 6:8 (*Year 3, Week 8*)

Leader: Brothers and sisters, our good and beautiful God has told us what is good. God has whispered in our ears and written on our hearts what God wants—no! what God requires of us!

People: **To seek justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God.**

Song

Encounter

Prayer for Illumination

Dear God, may your story and our stories shine your light on your hopes for us this day/night. Amen.

Scripture Reading

Option 1

Luke 22:7–27 (*Year 3, Week 28*)

Considerations: Use this passage if doing communion later.

Option 2

Acts 8:26–40 (*Year 3, Week 18*)

Reflection

Considerations: Allow students to provide the reflection based upon their experiences of the week.

Questions for Luke:

- In this passage, Jesus redefines the quest for greatness. How have you experienced a rub between the world's expectations for greatness and God's hopes for greatness during this trip?
- When, during the trip, did you witness Jesus' directions regarding leadership and service (v. 26)?
- How have you experienced sacramental or holy moments during the breaking of bread during this trip?

Questions for Acts:

- Did you experience any moments during this trip in which you were taught or helped someone learn something? How does the act of learning together shape us?
- What about Philip and the Ethiopian's experience mirrors our time spent here?

Considerations: Responses could include the short-term nature of the interaction, awkwardness of initial meeting and intimate sharing, transformation, being called away.

- Where do you see God's activity in this passage? Where do you recognize God's activity during this mission experience?
- Where/to what do you believe God may be calling you next?

Song of Reflection

Respond

Affirmation of Faith

Considerations: If worshiping alongside a partner faith community, consider using the Nicene Creed, which is the only creed accepted by all three major branches of Christendom (Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox Christians). If applicable, provide an opportunity for the creed to be read in the languages of all participating communities. You may have to bring some copies of the Nicene Creed with you on the trip, so plan ahead!

Option 1

Communion

Considerations: If you have someone who can serve communion and who is authorized to do so, consider serving communion around tables or in groups. Have participants serve each other the bread and the cup by passing it from person to person (by way of intinction). Specifically, try to mix up groups of the people of the local community and the people who came on the trip.

Invitation

(*From *Book of Common Worship*, ©1993. Westminster John Knox Press. www.wjkbooks.com. Used with permission.)

Friends, this is the joyful feast of the people of God!
They will come from east and west,
and from north and south,
and sit at table in the kingdom of God.

According to Luke,
when our risen Lord was at table with his disciples,
he took the bread, and blessed and broke it,
and gave it to them.
Then their eyes were opened
and they recognized him.

This is the Lord's table.
Our Savior invites those who trust him
to share the feast which he has prepared.

Prayer of Great Thanksgiving

Sharing the Bread and Cup

Prayer after Communion

Considerations: Allow space after each prompt for participants to pray to themselves or to pray aloud before continuing.

God of all people and all places, we thank you for gathering us around this table. We give thanks for all the ways that you feed us . . .

We give thanks for holy and unexpected encounters . . .

We pray that, having been filled up with your good gifts, we may be fueled to go forth from this table to serve you with renewed energy. We pray for the next acts of love and service to which you call us . . .

We pray this all in the name of the Savior of all the nations, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Option 2 (If no communion)

Prayers of the People

Considerations: Allow time within this prayer to allow participants to share their own prayers of gratitude and prayers for the community they are departing or people they have met.

Reaffirmation of Baptismal Covenant

Considerations: If not doing communion, consider a reaffirmation of baptismal covenant. This text ties nicely to the Acts text, and examples may be found in the *Book of Common Worship*.

Offering

Considerations: This is a wonderful opportunity for participants to provide an offering which benefits the community you are serving. It will be helpful if you tell participants ahead of time so that they may be prepared. The offering may be monetary or material goods which benefit the organization you partner with (examples: non-perishable food, school supplies).

Bless

Song of Sending

Charge

Matthew 28:18–20 (*Year 4, Week 30*)

And Jesus came and said to the disciples, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Benediction

Considerations: Use the song, “Go Now in Peace” (in rounds).

REENTRY FROM A MISSION TRIP

This service seeks to provide a space for thoughtful prayer and reflection upon returning from a mission trip. This may be a wonderful opportunity to continue to pray for those relationships that were formed on the trip as well as process what people discovered about God and their faith.

Playlist

“In the Hours,” Helen L. Parmlee, Kevin Twit, CCLI #5158502
“Blessed Assurance,” GTG #839, PH #341, CCLI #22324
“Let the Redeemed,” John Barnett, CCLI #314568
“Thy Word,” Amy Grant, Michael W. Smith, CCLI #14301
“Fire Fall Down,” Matt Crocker, CCLI #4705200
“Psalm 86,” Jenny and Tyler, *Open Your Doors*
“The Well and the Gravestone,” The Vespers, *Tell Your Mama*
“I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me,” GTG #700, PH #369, (*Recommended as the closing song*)

Gather

Considerations: Have images from different mission trips and the latest trip on posters around the worship space. Alternatively, show these images on PP slides as people are entering.

Call to Worship

Adapted from Psalm 107:13 (*Year 3, Week 30*)

Leader: Give thanks to the Lord, for God is good.

People: God’s love endures forever.

Leader: Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story,
those he gathered from the lands,
From east and west, north and south.

People: God’s love endures forever.

Leader: Come, let us worship God.

Song of Praise

Call to Confession

Prayer of Confession

O God, we confess that sometimes it’s hard to come back from a mission experience. Sometimes, when we return to our regular lives, we hit the wall of apathy. Sometimes, as we adjust to our daily routine, the stories we thought we’d never forget and the people who we promised to remember fade into the background and are drowned out by our busyness. God, keep ever in our mind the people and the stories. Help us not to neglect the people around us who need a glimpse of your love. Help us not to be blind to the injustices close by.

God of all our experiences, we also confess that we ourselves are in need of your help. Sometimes we serve you and serve others to feel good about ourselves, to bolster our resumé, to grow through the experience. We think of those with whom we have worked as somehow lesser than we are. We try to do things all on our own, instead of relying on you. God, forgive us, and grant us humility. Grant us the courage to ask for help.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Leader: Jesus Christ, though he was God, came down and became a servant for us. In Jesus’ death and resurrection we are made free. Our sins are forgiven, and we are empowered to work for God’s good pleasure. Friends, believe the good news:

People: In Jesus Christ we are forgiven!

Exhortation

From Philippians 2:1–11 (*Year 4, Week 5*)

Friends, if we have any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, let us make our joy complete by being of the same mind, and having the same love. Let us do nothing from selfish ambition, but in humility regard others as better than ourselves. Let us look not to our own interests, but to the interests of others.

Option 1

Scripture

Romans 1:8–12

Encounter

Considerations: Sharing stories of God’s work among us is important so that we may be mutually encouraged by the story of God working. Sharing of stories from the trip is an important part of processing God’s work in the world. Have three or four people chosen to share their stories with the whole group; this is especially important when not everyone went on the trip. Perhaps pass around a “flashlight,” as when around a campfire, telling stories. Dim the lights.

In between each story, sing the chorus of “Blessed Assurance” (see below).

This is my story; this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long;
This is my story; this is my song,
praising my Savior all the day long.

Option 2

Scripture

Psalm 107 (Year 3, Week 30)

Considerations: Do a dramatic reading of Psalm 107 with different groups acting out some of the scenarios in the psalm as a narrator reads the psalm from the New International Version. Have the narrator interject the words from verse 2 “Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story” after verses 9, 16, 22, and 32. Then move into have students share testimonies about the mission trip. Continue to use “Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story” between each testimony, allowing those words to provide continuity between the biblical story of God’s redemption and our present-day experiences.

Respond

Considerations: If you have decorated the worship space with posters of pictures from the mission trip, have people gather in groups around those posters and offer up prayers for the people and places those posters represent. Then, hand out news clippings of local and international situations that need prayer, one local situation and one international situation per group. Have each group pray for and over those situations.

Song

Considerations: If you choose to sing “I’m Gonna Live So God Can Use Me,” emphasize in this song the “anywhere, anytime.” The mission didn’t end with the trip. Also, consider singing the song a capella, with people slapping their hands on their knees for beats 2 and 4 for the first two verses (live and work), then snapping their fingers on beats 2 and 4 for verse three (pray), then clapping their hands above their heads on 2 and 4 for verse four (sing). Give brief instructions to this effect beforehand.

Bless

Considerations: Repeat a blessing from the mission trip.

Charge

Considerations: Do a “salt tasting.” Hand out packets of salt. Have everyone taste the salt. Then read Matthew 5:13–16. The visceral taste of the salt is a vivid reminder of the potent power of salt. Yet it is also a reminder that, when properly absorbed into a dish, salt is barely noticeable. Both quiet and powerful acts of service occur in concentrated mission trips and in our everyday lives.

God has given you peace, now go and share God’s peace!
God has sustained you with hope, now go and share God’s
hope!
God has granted you freedom, now go and share God’s
freedom!
God has called you to serve, now go and serve with joy!

Benediction

May the grace of Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit guide, protect, challenge, and inspire you this day and every day. Amen!

OCCASIONAL SERVICES: PASTORAL CARE AND LAMENT

SERVICE FOR HEALING AND WHOLENESS

Scripture describes a God who cares for our well-being and desires for us to have abundant life spiritually, mentally, and even physically. Healing and caring for the sick was central to the life and ministry of Jesus, a ministry we are called to continue. By God's grace, sometimes miraculous healing happens. Other times, healing doesn't always look the way we recognize or prefer. This reality should be acknowledged as you prepare to lead a service for healing and wholeness.

Before offering a service for healing and wholeness, you should also consult your session or presbytery. According to the Directory for Worship in the PC(USA) *Book of Order* (BOO), "Services for wholeness are to be authorized by the session, and shall be under the direction of the pastor. Such services may be observed as regularly scheduled services of worship, as occasional services, or as part of the Service for the Lord's Day" (W-3.3506).

Considerations of access for all should be made, such as the room and space being handicap-accessible. It's also important to mention that the act of anointing or laying on of hands is not an act of magic or a superstitious rite but an expression of solidarity with the suffering and a symbol of trust in Jesus' promises for wholeness. As our BOO notes, "When a service for wholeness includes anointing and the laying on of hands, these enacted prayers should be introduced carefully in order to avoid misinterpretation and misunderstanding. Healing is to be understood not as the result of the holiness, earnestness, or skill of those enacting the prayers, or of the faith of the ones seeking healing, but as the gift of God through the power of the Holy Spirit" (W-3.5400). For examples of services for wholeness and healing, see the *Book of Common Worship* (967–1030).

Playlist

"My Soul Is at Rest," GTG #843

"Healer," Mike Guglielmucci, CCLI #4873981

"Cling to the Crucified," Kevin Twit, CCLI #5158526,
version by Jeremy Casella

"Come, Ye Sinners," Dan Hamilton, Joseph Hart,
Robbie Seay, Ryan Owens, Taylor Johnson,
CCLI #4582588

"Let It Be," the Beatles, *Let It Be*

"Restore to Me," David Nasser, Mac Powell,
CCLI #4926742

"I Want Jesus to Walk with Me," Marion Williams

"Just as I Am," GTG #442, PH #370, CCLI #23206,
version by Johnny Cash, *My Mother's Hymnbook*

"Pray for Peace," version by Reba McEntire (music video on
reba.com)

"Drunkard's Prayer," Over the Rhine (*recommended as*
"Special Music")

"Bridge over Troubled Water," cover by Audrey Assad

SERVICE #1

Gather

Leader: The broken and breaking, who long to be healed.

People: Come, God of wholeness, heal us.

Leader: The weary and tired, who long for renewal.

People: Come, God of life, heal us.

Leader: The anxious and stressed, who long for peace.

People: Come, God of peace, heal us.

Encounter

Scripture

Matthew 11:28

Song

Considerations: Singing can be a powerful way to connect with God during worship. Short refrains, repeated many times, can be a powerful way to meditate on the love of God and healing power of Christ. Offering up just a simple phrase from a psalm or other song creates a contemplative worship space. As the line of one song or hymn is repeated over and over, the singing can be a way to abide in God's presence. This kind of singing is one way to offer worship, meditate on God's word, and listen deeply to God.

Scripture

Psalms 69:1–3, 13b–17 (*Year 2, Week 29*)

Moment for Silence

Reflection

Considerations: “How is it possible to reach inner silence? Sometimes we are apparently silent, and yet we have great discussions within, struggling with imaginary partners or with ourselves. Calming our souls requires a kind of simplicity: “I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me.” Silence means recognizing that my worries can’t do much. Silence means leaving to God what is beyond my reach and capacity. A moment of silence, even very short, is like a holy stop, a sabbatical rest, a truce of worries.”—*Taizé, *The Value of Silence* (taize.fr/en_article12.html) Used with permission.

Song

Prayer

As a broken people, let us pray to the Lord:

Leader: God of healing, you give us life and knit us together. But sometimes we neglect to care for what you created and love.

**People: When we experience pain from bad choices, heal us.
When we ignore or abuse what you created, forgive us.
Heal and restore our relationships with you, with one another, and with all creation.**

Time of Silent Meditation/Personal Confession

Leader: Hear the good news! God is gracious, loving and full of grace. Through God’s mercy and compassion, we can experience healing and wholeness.

The peace of the Lord be with you!

People: And also with you!

Song

Scripture Reading/Prayer

“Be Still and Know that I Am God”

Invite all to get into a comfortable position. For this reading, you may want to use a form of prayer called “kenotic” or “self-emptying” prayer. You simply read the one line of Scripture twice in a row, dropping off (emptying) one word or short phrase at a time, leaving sufficient times of silence between each section. Then, do the inversion of the phrase, starting with the shortest word moving toward the whole sentence.

Reader: Be still and know that I am God.

(repeat, then pause)

Be still and know that I am. *(repeat, then pause)*

Be still and know. *(repeat, then pause)*

Be still. *(repeat, then pause)*

Be. *(repeat, then pause)*

Be still. *(repeat, then pause)*

Be still and know. *(repeat, then pause)*

Be still and know that I am. *(repeat, then pause)*

Be still and know that I am God.

(repeat, then pause)

Time of Silence

Prayers of Intercession

Considerations: Feel free to name people and places in the times of silence. At the end of each prayer, please say the words listed below.

Leader: God in your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Respond

Anointing with Oil

Considerations: Those who wish may come forward at this time, as the leader says the words below to each individual anointed with oil.

“May the Spirit of God touch you body, mind, and soul. May the Lord heal you of all that harms you and make you whole. Amen.”

Song

Bless

Closing Response

All: Where there is despair, bring hope.

Where there is pain, bring peace.

**God of love and compassion, heal us,
and make us whole. Amen.**

Please depart in silence.

SERVICE #2:

Gather

Opening Prayer

Leader: Come, Holy Spirit. Breathe on us.

People: Restore us. Mend us. Heal us.

Leader: Come, Living Word. Speak to us today, in this place.

People: Teach us. Transform us. Change us.

Leader: Come, Loving Creator. Make us new.

People: Heal us Lord, and make us whole.

Song

Considerations: Not all of us have access to musicians or instruments, but music can still play a role in your service. Print out or project the lyrics to a song/hymn as you listen to the song via iPod or CD player. If you choose, you can reflect on the lyrics as part of your “Encounter” time.

Encounter

Scripture

Psalm 23 (*Year 1, Week 18*)

James 5:13–16 (*Year 4, Week 21*)

Respond

Song

Option 1

Anointing with Oil

Considerations: As the words of anointing are said, oil should be gently placed on the foreheads in the shape of a cross. This can be done as you sit in a circle, each participant blessing/anointing the person next to them. You may also wish to have one person anoint everyone, and invite those who wish to come forward for the blessing. Remember to be mindful of those who may not be physically able to come forward. You may want to go to them and ask if they’d like to receive a blessing and prayer. It’s also important to know not everyone is comfortable with touch. It’s important to quietly ask permission to touch someone, even in the context of worship.

Words of Anointing:

“May the Spirit of God touch your body, mind, and soul. May the Lord heal you of all that harms you and make you whole. Amen.”

Option 2

Laying on of Hands

Considerations: Other forms of touch, such as the laying on of hands, can also be powerful and appropriate during services for healing and wholeness. Participants could be invited to come forward to either kneel or sit and receive prayer. The prayer offered could be a general prayer, such as the one below, or a specific prayer addressing the unique concerns of the person receiving the laying on of hands. If it is an intimate-sized group (8–15), another alternative is to invite each person to sit in the center of the group. Others could surround the person in a circle, each laying their hands on the shoulders of those in front of them, taking turns “popcorn-style” to pray for the person in the middle.

General Prayer for the Laying on of Hands

“God of Healing, touch our brother/sister [*insert name here*]. We believe you desire for them abundant life. We ask you grant to them an awareness of your presence and a sense of your peace that passes understanding. Bless them body, mind, and soul. Heal them, and make them whole. Through the love of Christ and the power of your Holy Spirit. Amen.”

Bless

Song

Prayer

All-knowing and loving God, as we leave this place as your anointed people, help us to remember that nothing is impossible with you and your love. Your healing comes in many different forms, and we’re grateful that you hear and know where we need healing and wholeness. Amen.

Charge

Benediction

May the triune God of life preserve and protect you—body, mind, and soul. May the God of healing go with you and guide you, until that day when there will be no more crying, death, or pain. Amen.

SERVICE OF LAMENTATION (PERSONAL TRAGEDY)

In times of tragedy, students will want to gather as they search for meaning and comfort.

They will look to their faith as a source of hope in the midst of suffering, and they may find hope and comfort through a worship service like this one. It would be appropriate to use more music than normal and to use visual or audio tokens of remembrance such as candles, a slideshow of photos, or the toll of a bell. It is also worth considering that these occasions often bring guests into our worshiping communities who are not familiar with our customs, prayers, and language.

Playlist

- “Our God, Our Help in Ages Past,” Bruce Benedict,
Isaac Watts, William Croft, CCLI #4979775
- “Be Still, My Soul”
- “Amazing Grace”
- “Be Thou My Vision”
- “Through My Prayers,” Avett Brothers, *The Carpenter*
- “Love Never Fails you,” Brandon Heath, Chad Cates,
CCLI #5016015
- “Here,” David Leonard, Kari Jobe, Leslie Jordan,
CCLI #6184128
- “All Who Are Thirsty,” Brenton Brown, Glenn Robertson,
CCLI #2489542
- “Come, Ye Sinners,” Dan Hamilton, Joseph Hart, Robbie
Seay, Ryan Owens, Taylor Johnson, CCLI #4582588
- “Everything Falls,” Eddie Kirkland and Steve Fee,
CCLI #5490411

Gather

Welcome/Announcements

Considerations: It is appropriate to name the loss or tragedy at the beginning of the service and to speak some sentences of Scripture such as Psalm 121 (*Year 4, Week 12*), Isaiah 40:1–11, and/or John 14:1–6, 25–27 (*Year 1, Weeks 18 and 19*).

Opening Prayer

God of refuge and comfort, you are the Alpha and the Omega,
the beginning and the end, the first and the last.
We need your help this [*day/night*] more that we could have
imagined only a short time ago.

You tell us to bring our burdens to you, and that is what we
have gathered here to do.

Hear our cries, O God.
Show us your peace, O God.
Bring us hope, O God.

Guide us as we hear your Word and offer our words, that we
may know and speak your truth.
At the end of our time together, help us to leave this place
and reflect your light into a world of darkness. Amen.

Song

Encounter

Scripture

- Psalm 23 (*Year 1, Week 18*)
Psalm 46:1–5, 10–11 (*Year 2, Week 9*)
Psalm 130 (*Year 4, Week 17*)
Ecclesiastes 3:1–15 (*Year 2, Week 11*)
John 11:17–27
Romans 8:14–23, 31–39 (*Year 3, Week 23*)
1 Thessalonians 4:13–18

Song

Reflection

Respond

Song

Candle Lighting

Considerations: Set up a candle station with several rows of tea lights. On the sides of these rows, have two pillar candles already lit. Place a jar, small vase, or bowl filled with sand on both sides of the table. Purchase some thin wood-lighting sticks (from a craft store or candle supply online) and put them in the sand. The students will take a stick, light it from the pillar candle, light their candle(s), and then extinguish the stick by putting it back in the sand.

Have music played during the candle lighting time.
Students are invited to take the time to pray or sing along.

Group Prayer Time

Considerations: You may continue the music if you are moving into this group prayer time. Allow for students to move to different areas of the worship space and pray with leaders—student leaders, local pastors, or others who are comfortable praying with people.

Stand in a circle holding hands. Open with prayer and allow time for students to pray aloud as they are comfortable. You can also give some of the students a few pre-written prayers to share in the circle.

Prayers of Thanksgiving, Supplication, and Intercession with the Lord's Prayer

Considerations: This prayer will need to be written by the worship leader based upon the specific circumstances surrounding the tragedy. You can find prayers for various tragedies in the *Book of Common Worship* and at pcusa.org/media/uploads/september11/pdfs/september11-prayers-tragedy.pdf.

Putting the Lord's Prayer up on the screen or in a printed bulletin is always a good idea, especially for services where more guests are present. That way, those who may not know the Lord's Prayer will not feel out of place or alienated. Also, different denominations say "sins," "debts," or "trespasses."

Offering

Considerations: Depending on the nature of the tragedy, it may be appropriate to take up an offering at this point to help alleviate the suffering caused by the tragedy. This might be a monetary offering, but it might also be a place for people to volunteer to serve in some way.

Bless

Song

Charge

Just as you are comforted, go from this place to comfort others,

sharing the hope we have in Jesus Christ,
who shares in our suffering, and promises to one day make everything right.

Benediction

May the God of all comfort, the love of Christ, and the peace that passes understanding be with you all today and every day. Amen.

Postlude

SERVICE OF LAMENTATION (PUBLIC TRAGEDY)

National tragedies like 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, and school shootings are examples of times when students seek out places of worship for guidance, meaning-making, and community. When tragedy strikes, it's important to acknowledge the pain, confusion, and questions of those gathered. Part of the Christian tradition is the practice of lamentation. Laments are a way to pray through petition. In fact, Scripture affirms that weeping is a form of worship. Psalms of lament show us that we have permission to shake our fists in worship and be honest about the full breadth of human emotion and experience. During this service, participants will be invited to sing songs, sit in silence, write their own laments, and hear Scripture passages that speak of raw grief, confusion, healing, and hope. Given the sensitive nature of the service, it's important to make clear that no one should be forced to share in any part of the service. Before the service, you may want to say that all are welcome to participate in as much or as little as they feel comfortable. It may also be appropriate to invite certified and trained therapists or counselors from your school's counseling center or congregation to offer support during or after the service.

Playlist

- "O Come and Mourn," Frederick William Faber, Hal H. Hopson, CCLI #564387, version by Indelible Grace, featuring Sandra McCracken
- "Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Child," Sweet Honey in the Rock
- "You Have Redeemed My Soul," Don Chaffer, Lori Chaffer, CCLI #2759715
- "We shall Overcome," Pete Seeger
- "Psalm 23," Jason Upton, *Jacob's Dream*
- "Give Me Jesus," *African-American Heritage Hymnal* (Chicago: GIA Publication, Inc., 2001) #561
- "All the Poor and Powerless," David Leonard, Leslie Jordan, CCLI #5881130
- "Lord, Have Mercy," Taizé
- "Better Than a Hallelujah," Amy Grant, *Somewhere Down the Road*
- "Lawdy," the Vespers, *The Fourth Wall*
- "Pray for Peace," Reba McEntire (video on reba.com)

"None of Us Are Free," Solomon Burke (*This would be an appropriate song for a national tragedy that involves some sort of injustice issue/racial profiling, etc. It could be part of the Encounter section, as students gather in small groups to talk about the lyrics together and how they relate to tragedy and our call to be in solidarity with others, as Christ is in solidarity with us.*)

Gather

Call to Worship

Option 1

Adapted from Psalm 57 (*Year 2, Week 19*)

Leader: Show us mercy, God. Show us mercy,

People: for in you our souls take refuge.

Leader: In the shadow of your wings we will take refuge,

People: until the destroying storms pass us by.

Option 2

Leader: Loving God, come be with us.

People: We are heartbroken and afraid.

Leader: Holy Spirit, come sit with us.

People: Our hearts are heavy with grief.

Leader: Lord Jesus, come be our healer.

People: We long for your healing and love. Amen.

Song

Encounter

Scripture

Jeremiah 9:17–24

James 5:13–16 (*Year 4, Week 21*)

Psalm 130:1–6 (*Year 4, Week 17*)

Song

Scripture

Psalm 13 (read in unison) (*Year 1, Week 9*)

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

How long must I take counsel in my soul

and have sorrow in my heart all the day?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

Consider and answer me, O Lord my God;

light up my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death,

lest my enemy say, "I have prevailed over him,"

lest my foes rejoice because I am shaken.

But I have trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

Reflection

Option 1

DIY Psalms of Lament

Invite students to write their own psalms of lament. These laments can be personal prayers or on behalf of a group of people. You can encourage them to use psalms of lament as guides (such as Psalm 13 above), but assure them there is no right or wrong way to write an authentic prayer to God. This can be done in silence or with instrumental music playing softly in the background. At the conclusion of the time, invite all who are willing to share the laments by reading aloud to the group. In response to each lament, please say, “In our suffering, Lord, hear our prayer.” After each lament and response, please sit in a moment of silence between the readings, rather than having feedback or questions.

Option 2

Question/Wailing Wall

Have a large sheet of fabric and fabric markers available or banner paper and regular markers. Have the sheet lying on the ground and invite students to come and write their own laments, prayers, and questions to God on the sheet. In lieu of the sheet, you may have small pieces of paper or post-it notes where folks can write their laments, prayers, and questions to God and then stick them on a makeshift wall or place them into a bucket. This can be done during a song or in silence.



Question/Wailing Wall—photo by Tara Woodard-Lehman

Prayer (to close either option)

Loving God, listen to our cries and our prayers. As we lament, comfort us in our sadness, strengthen us in our weakness, and give us courage to get through this and every day. Amen.

Respond

Affirmation of Faith

Psalm 23 (Year 1, Week 18)

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul.
He guides me in paths of righteousness
for his name's sake. Even though I walk
through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil, for you are with me;
your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will
follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Offering

Considerations: Depending on the nature of the tragedy, it may be appropriate to take up an offering at this point to help alleviate the suffering caused by the tragedy. This might be a monetary offering, but it might also be a place for people to volunteer to serve in some way. You can also offer prayers for the people involved in the tragedy at this time.

Bless

Song

Charge

Leader: Go out from this place in peace.

People: We go, knowing the God of peace goes with us.

Leader: Go out from this place with hope.

**People: We go, trusting the God of hope will sustain us.
Amen.**

Benediction

May the God of all comfort, the love of Christ, and the Spirit who brings peace that passes all understanding be with you all today and every day. Amen.

GLOSSARY

NOTE: We compiled a list of words used in this resource that we thought might “trip up” or confuse someone planning and leading worship for the first time. This isn’t meant to be an exhaustive list of words about worship, but just the ones we thought would be most helpful to explain. In general, throughout this glossary, words that are *italicized* are given definitions elsewhere in the glossary.

The definitions offered here are necessarily very short. Obviously there is a lot that we cannot cover. If you want to read more in depth about anything that makes you curious, or if there are words you discover in other worship resources that you do not understand, we recommend the following books: *The Worship Architect*, Constance M. Cherry (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2010); *Worship for the Whole People of God*, Ruth C. Duck, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2013); *Introduction to Christian Worship*, James F. White (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000); and *Foundations of Christian Worship*, Susan J. White (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2006).

Advent—from the Latin for “coming,” a time of preparation and waiting, both for celebrating Christ’s coming in the flesh at *Christmas* and for preparing for Christ’s coming again. Begins four Sundays before *Christmas* and ends on Christmas Eve. (See *Liturgical Calendar*.)

Anointing—an ancient practice in which a little oil is smeared on the forehead or hand. Prayers are given for healing, blessing, commissioning for service, and, in some traditions, *baptism*.

Ash Wednesday—the first day of the season of *Lent*. Often a time to consider one’s sins, the sins of the world, or even one’s limits, finitude, and mortality. Named for the act of drawing the shape of a cross with ashes on the forehead or the hand. (See *Imposition of Ashes* and *Liturgical Calendar*.)

Assurance of Forgiveness—we come to God in the prayer of confession (see *Confession*) with confidence, laying our faults and failures before Jesus, because we are **assured of forgiveness**. The Assurance of Forgiveness always comes after the prayer of *Confession*, because we know that God is “slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love” and forgiveness (Num. 14:18), and that “while we were *still* sinners [before we even asked for

forgiveness], Christ died for us [to offer forgiveness and reconciliation],” (Rom. 5:8).

Baptism—welcome into God’s family. A person is sprinkled with water, or, in some traditions, immersed. The water is a powerful symbol, reminding us of being cleansed from sin, but also of the waters of creation, the water that accompanies us at birth, and, especially for those in the immersion tradition, of death and resurrection. Presbyterians allow infant baptism because they believe that God is at work in our lives before we can claim God as family or choose to believe.

Blessing—a prayer at the close of the service, asking for God’s blessing as the gathered scatter. Often begins with the word “may,” as in: “May the Lord bless you and keep you.”

Book of Confessions—one of two sources for Presbyterian belief and practice (the other being the *Book of Order*). The BOC contains statements of faith, including A Brief Statement of Faith, the Nicene Creed and Apostle’s Creed, and catechisms and confessions from Westminster and Heidelberg. These statements are used to remind us of the core of what we believe, though they are written out of their own particular time, by particular people, in a particular context.

Book of Common Worship—a very helpful resource of prayers and liturgies for congregational use. The current edition was written in the 1980s and published in 1993. It lays out an orderly form of worship, but pushes for freedom within these patterns and offers many different options for variable use. Could be considered the “parent” of this volume, but, obviously, is a few decades older and is more specifically for use in churches and not college campuses.

Book of Order—one of two sources for Presbyterian belief and practice (the other being the *Book of Confessions*). The BOO lays out church organization and government at multiple levels, provides standards for guiding worship, and offers procedures for when larger church bodies or churches must confront their members or their leadership because of an offense, disagreement, or breaking of the law.

Call to Worship—the “hello” of worship. It reminds us what we are to do in worship—come before God, together—and who is involved in worship—God and humans. Often done in call and response form.

Call to Confession—not a reminder of guilt, but that we bring our whole selves before God, faults and all. A reminder that we rely on God and that God forgives us.

CCLI—Christian Copyright Licensing International (ccli.com), along with onelicense.net and LicenSingonline.org, offer copyright licensing for songs and other worship resources (see CVLI.com for video licensing). CCLI generally offers licenses for more modern and contemporary worship, while Onelicense and LicenSingonline generally offer licenses for global music, hymns, or classically styled music. It is important to keep track of use of songs in worship and to report this to CCLI and other copyright corporations (or, if the composer is the copyright owner, to contact him/her). Composers and especially musicians often must live off of revenue from copyright. CCLI and other corporations provide a single place for churches and other organizations to track and record song use, instead of forcing churches to contact composers individually. This streamlined service has its problems and its benefits. But it is crucial—both legally, morally, and economically—to record when and how worship materials created by someone else are used.

Charge—a word of encouragement or challenge said either to or by the congregation before they depart. Not a prayer (see *Blessing*), but more like a mission statement for how to live until we come together again.

Christmas—from “Christ’s mass.” The word “mass” comes from the final words of traditional Latin medieval worship service. The words basically mean “you are sent.” “Mass” came to mean the celebration of communion, along with singing, prayer, Scripture reading, and a homily. Christ’s mass, in particular, is the celebration of Jesus’ birth, or “incarnation”—which means “becoming flesh,” or, basically, when Jesus became a human being. (See *Liturgical Calendar*.)

Closing Prayer—a prayer for the end of worship or the end of the communion meal. Often a prayer of thanksgiving to God for what has been experienced in worship.

Confession—the “how are you doing?” of worship. A time to lay bare before God our faults, failures, broken relationships, and to ask God for forgiveness, spoken in confidence that God does love us and God will forgive us.

Communion—a meal of remembrance of Christ’s death and resurrection. Also called The Lord’s Supper (after the meal Jesus ate with his disciples at Passover) and the Eucharist (after the Greek word that means “thanksgiving”). Not just reminiscing, though, but also an invitation to be in the presence of the living Christ. Both a time of remembering that Christ died, and therefore a serious time, and also a time of remembering that Christ died because he loves us, because he ate with sinners and welcomes the weak and powerless to the table, and therefore a time of celebration and thanksgiving. (See also *Invitation*, *Great Prayer of Thanksgiving*, and *Words of Institution*.)

Contemplatio—the fourth of four parts of *lectio divina*. A moment of resting in God in peace, solitude, gratitude, and receptivity.

Easter—the name that we have adopted for the celebration of Christ’s resurrection. Originally based on the name for an Anglo-Saxon goddess who was related to the coming of spring. Early Christians (and some Christians around the world today) use the word “Pascha,” which was related to the Jewish celebration of Passover. (See *Liturgical Calendar*.)

Ecumenical—from the Greek word “oikoumene,” which referred to the entire world. Often used to talk about interdenominational work—Presbyterians and Lutherans, Catholics and Baptists, Orthodox and Free Church doing things together, side by side. This dates back to Roman times, when “oikoumene” meant the whole inhabited world, or, basically, the Roman Empire. When the early church needed to make decisions that impacted everyone, they would hold an “ecumenical” council, with representatives from all over the known world. These councils broke down after a few hundred years. For almost a thousand years, the church experienced major divisions, especially between Orthodox and Catholic traditions, then Catholic and Protestant denominations. In the twentieth century, spurred on by common work in mission, service, and social justice, advances in technology, and the need to respond to colonialism and the horrific wars of the middle century, the ecumenical movement shifted into high gear. By this point, the church had splintered into hundreds of denominations, each with unique patterns of worship and belief.

Epiphany—from a word meaning “manifestation,” or “revealing.” Begins on January 6, which is the last of the “twelve days of Christmas” (take note: the twelve days start after Christmas!). Lasts until *Ash Wednesday*, the beginning of *Lent* (see those entries). Includes celebrations of the many ways that Jesus was “revealed” as God: the visit by the Magi (or “Wise Men” or “kings,” of which there were multiple, but not necessarily three), Jesus’ baptism, Jesus’ first miracle, and Jesus’ “transfiguration”—when he went on a mountaintop with Peter, James, and John, spoke with Moses and Elijah, and was revealed in beauty and glory. (See *Liturgical Calendar*.)

Footwashing—a practice of humility, friendship, service, and solidarity. Based upon Jesus’ washing of his disciples’ feet in the Gospel of John and the woman’s washing of Jesus’ feet in the Gospel of Luke. Often celebrated along with communion (as part of a remembrance of Jesus’ last meal with his disciples) on *Maundy Thursday*. A reminder of our mutual service and that Christ calls us “friends.”

GERB—shorthand for Gather, Encounter, Respond, and Bless, which are, in turn, shorthand for the general “flow” or “rhythm” of worship that Presbyterians most often use. This rhythm of worship is actually used in some form or another by most Christians across the world. Different prayers, celebrations, or elements occur in different parts of the service depending on tradition, but the general movement is the same. The format is essentially an encounter, or even a conversation, in which people gather together, speak and respond, and leave with a blessing. See the Introduction to this resource for more information.

Good Friday—the day for remembering Jesus’ death by crucifixion. The word “good” was initially used in the sense of something holy or sacred. Oftentimes celebrated by reading the entirety of the “Passion” narrative—Jesus’ capture by the soldiers in the Garden of Gethsemane, his multiple trials, his crucifixion, and then death. Some traditions do a “seven last words” service, in which brief reflections, prayers, and songs are related to the seven last phrases and sentences that Jesus’ utters before his death, as compiled from all four Gospels. (See *Liturgical Calendar*.)

Great Thanksgiving—a part of the conversation within a communion that is the Communion meal. The Great Thanksgiving offers thanks to God for all that God has done, often beginning with creation (sometimes specifically for wheat and grapes, bread and wine), and moving through Christ’s life, death, and resurrection. It also includes asking the Holy Spirit to make the bread and cup fruitful in our worship, that we experience them as the body and blood of Jesus, that we are involved in Christ’s presence and a part of his ongoing work in the world. In very traditional settings, it begins with the “*sursum corda*,” “Lift up your hearts . . .,” moves to the history of God’s actions, then praise for these actions (the “*sanctus*,” “holy, holy, holy are you, God of power and might . . .”), then a summary of Jesus’ life and work, often followed by the “acclamation” “Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again,” followed by the “*epiclesis*” (Greek for “come down”), which asks for the Holy Spirit’s work, and finally a “doxology,” a final word of praise, and an Amen. In some traditions, the person who is leading communion (known as the “celebrant”) will simply say all of these things, either in a large or a short form. In other traditions, the congregation will join in on the “*sursum corda*,” the “*sanctus*,” the “acclamation,” and the “doxology.” In some traditions, most of these named parts are sung instead of spoken. (See also *Communion*.)

Iona—a community in Scotland that lives on Iona island. It is an ecumenical church (see *Ecumenical*) known for its hospitality. A leading force in the revival of Celtic Christianity, Iona is also known for John L. Bell, a musician and worship leader who, along with GIA Publications, has worked to bring global Christian music to Europe and North America.

Imposition of Ashes—a practice done on *Ash Wednesday*. The palm branches from the previous year’s celebration of *Palm Sunday* are burnt into ashes and combined with oil. As participants come forward, they are given a blessing, reminded of Christ’s sacrifice and forgiveness, and sometimes reminded of their human limitations with the words “From dust you came, to dust you will return.” Then, a worship leader will draw a cross on the forehead or hand with the ashes-oil mixture. This ritual reminds us of the season of thoughtful reflection into which we are entering (see *Lent*), and the climax of that season—Christ’s death on a cross.

Intinction—rip and dip! A way of doing *communion* in which participants dip a small piece of bread (sometimes ripped from a larger loaf) into the cup of wine or juice. In this way, both elements (bread and wine) are taken at the same time. Participants normally come forward to receive communion from a few people with loaves and cups, rather than having communion served to them in their pews with tiny shot glasses and a wafer.

Invitation—a call and response said at the beginning of *communion*. The invitation reminds us that the table to which we come is Jesus' table, that God invites us and welcomes us in love, that *all* are welcome. Some traditions practice a "closed table," meaning that only particular people can come—specifically those who are baptized (sometimes into a particular denomination), who profess belief in Jesus Christ, and who have confessed and repented of their sins. Others practice "open table," in which anyone is welcome. Those who practice "closed table" often do so out of the instructions of Paul about coming to the table in 1 Corinthians, and out of respect for God's gift and the ability to understand what that gift means. Those who practice "open table" often do so because of Jesus' radical hospitality in eating with tax collectors and sinners and a desire to emphasize that God's grace and forgiveness are for the whole world.

Laying on of Hands—another ancient practice of blessing and, often, commissioning for service. People put their hands on someone's shoulder or head to pray for healing, or to ask for the Holy Spirit to prepare them for a certain kind of ministry (service work, ordained service as an elder, deacon, pastor, or other church leader, etc.).

Lectio—the first of four parts in *lectio divina*. The reading of a select and brief portion of Scripture, usually a self-contained story, or a single psalm or part of a psalm.

Lectionary (see also the *Revised Common Lectionary*)—an organized resource suggesting Scripture passages to be read and reflected upon in worship for each Sunday of the year. From the Latin word for "reading," "lectio." Many lectionaries select out Scriptures and do not cover every single word of the Bible. Some churches in the Reformed tradition practice "lectio continua," based on the practices of John Calvin. Calvin was an important figure in starting the Reformed movement. "Lectio continua" involves preaching through the Bible or a book of the Bible, from beginning to end, going verse by verse for as many Sundays as it takes to read and reflect upon the whole text. Other churches do not use

any kind of lectionary and simply preach and worship based upon thematic issues. We have created a four-year lectionary specifically for this resources and for college ministries. See the Introduction for more information.

Lectio Divina—literally "divine reading." A way of praying through Scripture devotionally that was begun centuries ago and has experienced a revival in the late twentieth century. It involves four movements: *lectio* (reading), *meditatio* (reflecting), *oratio* (praying), *contemplatio* (resting). For more information, see the individual entries for each of these movements.

Lent—the forty days (if you ignore Sundays, which count as "mini" Easters) before *Easter*. Was once a time of preparation for baptism for those who were joining the church. Now a time of repentance and self-examination for everyone in the church. Begins with *Ash Wednesday*, includes *Palm Sunday*, and culminates in the three-day celebration of *Maundy Thursday*, *Good Friday*, and *Holy Saturday*, right before *Easter*. (See *Liturgical Calendar* and the individual entries for the italicized terms.)

Liturgy/Liturgist—the word "liturgy" broadly means a public work of and for the people. It was used for sponsored public works in ancient Greece, gifts that people gave for the good of the city. It became a word for what the people of the church did in worship weekly on behalf of their context as a sort of "priesthood of all believers." Soon, this was even adapted to talk about just the words and prayers and order used in worship services. The *Liturgist* is someone who leads the liturgy.

Liturgical Calendar—also known as the "Church Year." In order to remind themselves of the major events in the life of Christ and the church, many traditions follow a calendar that celebrates these major events every year. The process of marking out when to celebrate what began in the third century (the 200s) and was pretty much settled by the fourth century (the 300s). The church year, as opposed to the calendar year, begins with the first Sunday in *Advent*, normally the Sunday after our United States celebration of Thanksgiving. A brief version of the calendar and church "seasons" is to the right. Words in *italics* are covered in detail elsewhere in this glossary.

Liturgical Calendar

SEASON	SPECIAL DAYS/ NOTES ABOUT THE SEASON
<i>Advent</i>	Four weeks
<i>Christmas</i>	Two weeks Christmas Eve Christmas Day Twelve Days of Christmas (begins on Christmas Day)
<i>Epiphany</i>	Number of weeks varies based on when Easter, and therefore Ash Wednesday is scheduled. The scheduling of these is based not on the calendar year, but on when the Jewish Passover occurs. Baptism of the Lord Transfiguration Sunday
<i>Lent</i>	<i>Ash Wednesday</i> <i>Palm Sunday</i> (The beginning of “Holy Week,” or “Passion Week”) <i>Maundy Thursday</i> <i>Good Friday</i> Holy Saturday
<i>Easter (Pascha)</i>	Lasts fifty days (approximately 7 weeks), until Pentecost <i>Easter Sunday</i> Ascension of the Lord (the sixth Thursday after Easter) <i>Pentecost</i>
<i>Ordinary Time</i>	The time between Easter and Advent. Length varies depending on the scheduling of Easter. Trinity Sunday (first Sunday after <i>Pentecost</i>) Christ the King (Last Sunday before <i>Advent</i>)

Magnificat—from the Latin word which begins Mary’s song in Luke, “My soul *magnifies* the Lord . . .” The word has become synonymous with the title for this entire song and musical versions of the text.

Maundy Thursday—the night of the Last Supper of Jesus and his disciples. The basis for our practice of *communion*. “Maundy” is related to the Latin word for “commandment,” which alludes to Jesus’ command for his disciples to “love one another” in the Gospel of John. (See *Liturgical Calendar*.)

Meditatio—the second of four parts in *lectio divina*. Participants meditate on what was read. The word is related to a word for “chew.” Sometimes during *meditatio*, participants think about a particular word or phrase from the reading that was meaningful for them, or caught their attention.

Offering—as a response to what God has done and is doing, we offer something of ourselves—often monetary, but also our time, our talents, our hopes and dreams.

One Great Hour of Sharing— an *ecumenical* ministry started after the horrors of World War II. Protestant churches got together to pool their resources for supporting those suffering from catastrophic events. This special *offering* normally takes place around *Easter*. For more information, go to onegreathourofsharing.org.

Oratio—the third of four parts in *lectio divina*. A prayer of conversation with God about how the words of Scripture read in the first part of *lectio divina* (“lectio”) change, encourage, or heal us.

Palm Sunday—the beginning of Holy Week, or Passion Week, which culminates in *Maundy Thursday*, *Good Friday*, *Holy Saturday*, and *Easter*. Named Palm Sunday because of the palm branches laid down before Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. (See the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.)

Pentecost—based on the Jewish festival of the Feast of Weeks, which took place fifty days after what we celebrate as *Easter*. Christians celebrate Pentecost as the day that the disciples received the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts. Sometimes called the “birth” of the church. (See *Liturgical Calendar*.)

Playlist—our word for the songs and other resources that we suggest at the beginning of our Occasional Services. These songs and resources are suggestions that match the theme or Scripture verse(s) that form the core of the worship service.

Prayers of the People—also called prayers of intercession.

During this time, concerns on the personal, local, national, and international level are brought before God. This can be done in a single prayer by the worship leader, in a “call and response” style wherein the leader suggests a theme for prayer and then leaves space for people to name specific prayers either aloud or in their hearts before suggesting another theme, or in a more freewheeling (or “popcorn”) style wherein one person opens a time for prayer, leaves space for anyone who wants to pray about anything, then closes the time. Often, the Prayers of the People end with everyone joining together in a version of the Lord’s Prayer from the Gospel of Matthew.

Prayer for Illumination—a simple prayer asking God to enliven our minds, to help us grasp and receive what God has to say to us. Usually spoken before the reading of Scripture and preaching. Often plays off of images of “light” (thus, illumination) from the Psalms, Gospels, and New Testament letters.

Reaffirmation of Baptism—the Sacrament of Baptism is considered to be a “once for all” action. Once a person has been baptized, she does not need to be baptized again. At the same time, it is important to be reminded of this act, as it is one of the most important events in the life of a Christian. The apostle Paul continually reminds those to whom he wrote letters about their baptisms. Especially in those traditions that practice infant baptism, a Reaffirmation of Baptism reminds them of what God has done and is doing for them.

Reformed Worship—every Christian tradition practices worship in unique ways. In the Reformed tradition (of which the Presbyterian family of churches is one branch), worship emphasizes the *Sacraments of Baptism and Communion*, sung and spoken prayer, and the reading and interpretation of Scripture. Reformed worship is simple, but not simplistic. It is meant to be clear and free of unnecessary actions that draw worshippers away from God. Yet, everything done in worship should have deep meaning, thereby offering possibilities for rich participation by the congregation. A few historical examples from the early days of the Reformed tradition may help to illustrate. During the mid 1500s, zealous, newly Reformed people tore down icons and tore out stained-glass windows. They considered these features distracting from a focus on God’s word in Scripture. While John Calvin, one of the fathers of the Reformed tradition, did not approve of the violent ways these images were removed, he agreed that

icons were not strictly necessary for worship. The focus should not be on icons, which for many Reformers seemed to lead down a slippery slope to worshipping idols and graven images, but on the word (though some argued images were meant to help illiterate people to understand the word, at least initially). This focus on the word came about in response to the invention of the printing press and as a reaction against church practices in which ordinary people were excluded because the Bible was not read in their local language. Before the printing press, most people could not read the Bible for themselves. After the printing press, anyone who could be taught to read could begin to understand the Scripture. The Reformers encouraged this. Again, before the Reformation, many priests dressed in elaborate robes. Calvin insisted that his clergy wear plain black robes, such as those worn by teachers or lawmakers, so as not to differentiate themselves too much from people in their churches. Finally, before the Reformation, most of the *liturgy* was spoken in flowery Latin, even in countries where most people did not know Latin. Calvin and other Reformers insisted that the *liturgy* should be in the local language, so that it could be understood. The emphasis was on clarity of speech and action. Simple, but not simplistic.

Revised Common Lectionary (RCL)—one of the most commonly used lectionaries (see *Lectionary*) in the world. It is based on a three-year cycle of selected Scripture readings. Every Sunday, readings from the Old Testament, the Psalms, the Gospels, and the New Testament are chosen. There are also lists of Scripture passages for daily prayer, each day of the week. The RCL was created in 1992.

Sacraments—from Latin, meaning “sacred or holy things,” things that are set apart and special. Though the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions affirm at least seven sacraments (the Orthodox tradition is open to even more), most Protestant traditions basically only recognize two: *baptism* and *communion*. They do this because these are the two that are acknowledged to have been instituted by Jesus in the Gospels (though some traditions including *footwashing* for this same reason). Sacraments are physical and verbal signs that point to something that God has done and is doing. So, for instance, in baptism, the water is *representative* of God’s washing someone clean and granting that person rebirth. The actual human action of pouring water is not what *makes* someone clean, but it is a visual and physical sign, which, along with the words said at

baptism, help to make apparent to us something that God is doing in someone's life. People in the Reformed tradition believe that God is doing something through the actual symbolic acts, though God's action is not limited to those acts.

Taizé (pronounced TUH zay)—an ecumenical community of men located in southeastern France that welcomes hundreds of thousands of pilgrims every year. Started by a Swiss brother, Roger Schutz-Marsauche, as a place of reconciliation after World War II. The brothers pray together three times a day, and it is the chants and prayers from these times of worship for which Taizé is probably best known around the world. The brothers commit themselves to a common life, celibacy, and simplicity. Any donations, gifts, or even inheritance they receive are given to the poor. They survive by the work of their hands.

Testimonial/Testimony—based upon legal and judicial language in which a witness “testifies” to what she has seen. In the Christian tradition, it refers most often to speaking of experiences or encounters of God, in which one has witnessed God's action at work.

UKirk—a network of (predominantly) Presbyterian Church (U. S. A.) campus ministers and students who share information, resources, and ideas in order to support their ministries. For more, see the Introduction and our website: ukirk.org.

Words of Institution—a repetition of the words (“Do this in remembrance of me”) spoken by Jesus at his Last Supper with the disciples as recorded in the Gospels. Sometimes also includes a variation of Paul's words about communion from 1 Corinthians 11:23–26. Called “words of institution” in reference to the belief that the Last Supper is when Jesus “instituted” (commanded, established, or started) the practice of communion. (See also *Communion* and *Sacraments*.)



UKirk.org

